E.2.A.

Briefe discourse of certaine points of the *religion, which is among the* common sort of Christians, *which may be termed the Countrey Diuinitie.*

With a manifest confuta*tion of the same, after the* order of a Dialogue.

Compiled by *George Gifford.*

Imprinted at London, by Richard Field, and Felix Kingston.

1612.

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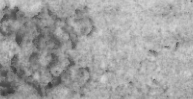

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1612.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE HIS VERY GOOD LORD, AMBROSE EARLE OF WARwicke, Maister of her Majesties Ordinance, Knight of the noble order of the Garter, and one of her Highnesse most honourable priuie Councell.

GEORGE GIFFORD *wisheth increase of all true happinesse and honour, with the continuall comfort of a good conscience.*

IN Nothing doubt (right Honorable) but that it will seeme great rashnes vnto some, and no smal folly, to offer and present so simple and sleeder a booke as this is, vnto your Lordship: for what doth it seeme to bring with it worthie the person of a Nobleman? There is no pompe in the maner of speech, for it is rude & countrey like: the matter it selfe is not handled as a disputation betweene deepe Diuines, but after the maner of ploughmen and carters: a great absurditie therefore appeareth in this, that an honorable person of great dignity should be called for, as it were to stand by and heare such speak. Good cause there is therefore that I should render some reason of this my boldnesse, which I will willingly do, to vse that which the heathen Poet saith,

Si canimus syluas, syluæ sunt Consule dignæ,

will not suffise: for although respecting the things which I handle, because they belong to the trees that are planted in the Lordes Orchard, they doe as farre excell the woods & groues, as the vine doth the bramble bush, yet neuertheleſſe he hath ſo richly decked his baſe and beggerly matter, he hath ſo clothed it in ſilkes from top to toe, and hath hanged ſo many iewels vpon it, that it ſhall find entertainment, and be thought meete for the courts of Princes: whereas mine being very poorely clad, will be reiected. I will expreſſe therfore a better reaſon of my doing, which is this. As thoſe which haue corne fields, thinke it not a thing vnmeete to be told by their ſeruants of thiſtles and weeds, which would hinder and marre the corne, if they prouide not to haue them plucked vp: euen ſo I know that it is not an vnworthie thing, to ſhew vnto thoſe which are of high calling, the hurtfull and dangerous weedes which would ouergrow and choke the heauenly ſeede of the Goſpell, ſowne in the Lordes field. When as our Church therefore & common wealth, being the Lords husbandrie, is ouergrowne with weedes, and almoſt laid waſt, I ſee no cauſe wherefore I may iuſtly be blamed, for giuing notice thereof in ſome part vnto your Honour: ſeeing the principall cauſes, and fountaines from whence corruptions flow, are to be taken away and dried vp, by thoſe whom God hath placed in the higheſt roomes. Among which, the want of a ſincere miniſterie of the word is the greateſt: through abſence of which, there is a flood of ignorance and darkneſſe, ouerflowing the moſt part of the land: the feare of God is baniſhed from the greateſt part: the wonderfull heapes and piles of ſinne, which ſhould be waſhed and cleanſed away by the word, do vndoubtedly with one voyce cry alowd in the eares of the Lord, for vengeance vpon the whole Realme. The Papiſts cannot be conuerted, but hardned and turned out of the way, there is ſo foule diſ-

order

order, and so many stumbling blockes cast in the way. The Diuell hath elbow roome to spread abroad, to plant and water all kinde of errours, so few there be to withstand him. But to come to that particular which I handle in this Treatise: there are the most in number, who hauing Poperie taken from them, and not taught throughly and sufficiently in the Gospell, do stand as men indifferent; so that they may quietly enioy the world, they care not what religion come: they are like naked men, fit and ready for any coate almost that may be put vpon them. The life of these is exceeding prophane, they haue hardned themselues in their sinnes, by reason which they gather partly out of their own braine, and partly out of some sayings in the world, by which they cloake and defend their owne corrupt wayes. I haue therefore gathered the most common principles of their faith and religion, by which they arme themselues against true repentance, & right vnderstanding: I haue not noted all, neither haue I medled with those seuerall grosse absurdities, which each hath proper to himselfe, for that should be infinite. I trust your Lordship will rightly construe my good meaning, and take in good worth this simple Treatise: pitying the case of the poore Church of Christ, which is so full of grieuous sicknesses and sores, that vnlesse she be relieued and cured, she will scarce be able to continue life. She cannot but most humbly craue this dutie at the hands of those which are neare about her deare nurse: from whom she hath now long time receiued wonderful protection and defence against aduersaries, that they make known her state, and labor the recouery & retaining of her health: because it doth stand not onely with their eternall glorie in the world to come, but also with their honourable estate in this life. Which cannot be established to florish in continuance, vnlesse the Lord God haue his throne

so erected in the middest of her, that she may florish. For where he is dishonored and despised of those whom she nourisheth in her bosome, her ease is dangerous; for it is against all wise policie, to make him an aduersarie who hath all power, & of himselfe is able to roote out & destroy mighty kingdomes: so that if she keepe in fauour & league with him, there is no feare of any other.

This Lord of Lords, and most mightie king increase abundantly in you all heauenly and spirituall graces, with increase of honour in this world, to his glory, and your eternall comfort. Amen.

Your Honours most
humble to command,

GEORGE GIFFORD.

A

A briefe discourse of certaine points of the religion which is among the common sort of Christians: which may be termed the Country diuinity: with a plaine and manifest confutation of the same, after the order of a Dialogue.

Zelotes. *Atheos.*

Zelot. WEll ouertaken my friend.

Atheos. I thanke you Sir.

Zelot. How farre do you trauell this way?

Ath. Twentie myles.

Zelot. Do you dwell in Essex?

Ath. Yea, not farre from Chelmesord.

Zelot. What call you the town where ye dwell?

Ath. G. B.

Zelot. Haue ye a Preacher there?

Ath. We haue an honest mã our Curat.

Zelot. Doth he teach his flocke?

Ath. He doth his good will, and more ye cannot require of a man.

Zelot. Ye did commend him euen now, to be an honest man.

Ath. Commend him? yea I may cõmend him: I am perswaded we haue the best

Priest in this country, we would be loth to forgo him for the learnedest of them all.

Zelot. I pray you let me heare what his vertues be, for which you commend him so highly.

Ath. He is as gentle a person as euer I see: a very good fellow, he will not sticke when good fellowes and honest men méete together, to spend his groate at the ale-house: I cannot tell, they preach & preach, but he doth liue as well as the best of them all. I am afrayd when he is gone, we shall neuer haue the like againe.

Zelot. Be these the great vertues which you do commend him for? he may haue all these, and yet be more meete to keepe swine, then to be a shepheard ouer the flocke of Christ. Is he able to teach the people, and doth he instruct them in Gods word?

Ath. I know not what teaching ye would haue, he doth reade the Seruice as well as any of them all, and I thinke there is as good edifying in those prayers and Homelies, as in any that the Preacher cã make: let vs learne those first.

Zelot. That is not all which is required in a Minister, for a boy of ten yeares old can do all this: doth he not teach them to know the will of God, and reproue naughtines among

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the people?

Ath. Yes that he doth, for if there be any that do not agree, he will seeke to make them friends: for he will get them to play a game or two at bowles or cardes, and to drinke together at the alehouse: I thinke it a godly way, to make charity: he is none of these busie controllers: for if he were, he could not be so well liked of some (and those not of the meanest) as he is.

Zelot. Do ye call the Preachers of Gods word busie controllers? do they go further then Gods word doth leade them?

Ath. We may call them busie controllers, I thinke we shall do nothing shortly: as poore a man as I am, I would not for fortie shillings that we had one of them, there be more of my mind.

Zelot. Some poore men perhaps.

Ath. Nay, the best in the Parish, who would not so well like of our Curat, if he should meddle that way.

Zelot. I perceiue now what manner of man your Curat is, and I see like maister like scholer.

Ath. Why so I pray you?

Zelot. Why so? I smell how vnmeete he is, and also how ignorant you are. Let me question a litle while with you concerning

that which ye haue vttered.

Ath. **I trust I haue vttered nothing but that which doth become an honest man.**

Zelot. Nay, all your speech doth bewray that you are a carnal man, for you haue made a very fine description of a good Curate: what meane ye when ye say, he is a good fellow, and will not sticke to spend his money among good fellowes, is it not because he is a pot-companion?

Ath. **Do ye mislike good fellowship? is it not lawfull for honest men to drinke and be merrie together?**

Zelot. I do not mislike true friendship which is in the Lord, knit in true godlinesse; but I mislike this vice which ouerfloweth euery where, that drunkards meete together and sit quaffing, and the Minister which should reproue thē, to be one of the chiefe: when he should be at his study, to be vpon the ale-bench at cards or dice.

Ath. **I perceiue you are one of those curious and precise fellowes, which will allow no recreation: what would ye haue men do? we shall do nothing shortly. You would haue men sit moping alwayes at their bookes, I like not that.**

Zelot. Nay my friend, I do not allow that recreation, which prophane men call so, which

which is no recreation, but a torment to a godly minde, to see men drunken, to heare them sweare and raile, to spend their goods and their time so leudly; and he that should teach them, to be a ringleader: as there be many as it seemeth, which are entred into the ministerie, for none other purpose, but to liue an idle life, to haue leisure to play at cardes, or tables, and bowles all the weeke; and therefore they haue no skil to teach: but like vnsauery salt, are not good euen for the dunghill.

Ath. **These things were vsed before you were borne, and will be when you are gone, so long as men thinke no hurt when they play and be merrie.**

Zelot. I perceiue you are of the right stamp, ye are light vpon an argument, which may well be termed old Suresbee, because it bringeth a reason which doth sticke by many, when all other reasons forsake them. But let vs pul this old fellow out of his new coat, and ye shall see what a leane shrimpe he is, and so feeble, that he cannot go on stilts. These things were vsed, say you, before you were borne, so were all other naughtie vices; are they now good because they be old? because men committed them before I was borne, and will do when I am dead?

Ath. I meane not so, but there were as wise men, and wiser then be now, among our forefathers: and they would not haue bled nor allowed such things, if they had not bene good: they knew well inough what they did. Let not vs be more precise then they were.

Zelot. I perceiue you ground your faith and your doings vpon men, and not vpon Gods word.

Ath. I pray God I may follow our forefathers, and do no worse then they did: what should we seeke for to be wiser or better then they? I would we could do but as well as they did.

Zelot. Do you not thinke that there were among our forefathers, theeues, murtherers, adulterers, drunkards, and such like?

Ath. I thinke there haue bene alwayes euill doers, and will be til the worlds end.

Zelot. Would ye haue vs to follow those, and to take their vices?

Ath. We are not to follow any thing but that which is good: and those which were godly and wise.

Zelot. Is there any thing good, but that which God setteth downe in his word? and were any wise and godly, but such as did follow the will of God expressed in his word?

Ath.

Ath. There is nothing good but of God, and such as do as he commandeth.

Zelot. Then you see old Suretbee laid flat vpon the ground, and your lustie champion is manifested to be but skin and bones, and the same halfe rotten: for now by your own confessiō doth follow, that the word of God is the onely rule, and we must follow our forefathers no further thē they followed the word of God. You must not follow Dauid nor Abraham in euery thing they did. Furthermore also these naughty vices and corrupt customes came from the wicked forefathers, and not from the godly, which followed Gods word.

Ath. That is true; but I will follow our forefathers: now there is no loue then they liued in friendship, and made merrie together: now there is no good neighbourhood: now euery man for himselfe, and are ready to pull one another by the throate.

Zelot. There are but a few of your minde in this thing, are there?

Ath. Yes, the greatest part: for I know almost none, but they will affirme this matter.

Zelot. If the greatest part be of your minde, wherefore is there not then a great deale of loue and friendship, where you say

there is none? why do ye not being the moſt in number, repaire the ruines of that old faithfull friendſhip, which ye ſay is decayed? Ye ſay that there was loue and friendſhip, and ye ſeeme to lament the want of them, and yet there is none in your ſelues: for ye be verie full of malice and ſtrife. Is there any buzzard ſo blind, but that he may eſpie your groſſe follie and vanitie in this point, when with open mouth you cry for loue, loue, and be the greateſt enemies thereunto your ſelues? Moreouer, ye follow your owne fond and doting opinion, that ye imagine a thing which neuer was; for the world hath euer bene like it ſelfe, full of debate and ſtrife, a very few in al ages which haue had true loue. Againe, you call none loue, but that carnall loue, which is in eating and drinking, and other fooliſh delights. That which is the true loue, you condemne to be hatred. For if a man admoniſh and reproue you for any naughtie vice, which is the greateſt loue; by and by ye ſtampe and ſtare like mad men, and ſay, now there is no loue: except a man do flatter ye, and be partaker of your foule and beaſtly ſinnes, ye are at deadly hatred with him. But let vs returne againe to Sir Robert, ye ſaid he was as good a liuer as the beſt of them all.

Ath.

Ath. I say so still, for he is content with his liuing: many of your spirituall men are neuer satisfied: for with that poore liuing he hath, he doth keepe a good house, and doth feede the poore.

Zelot. You proue him to be a good liuer, by comparing him with those which are worse: It is all one as if a man would proue a theefe which hath stolen twentie pounds to be a good theefe, because he is not so euil as he which hath stolen a thousand pounds.

Ath. Ye do not well to compare true men with theeues.

Zelot. Is not he a theefe which doth take the hire, and doth not that which he should do for it?

Ath. He is as good as a theefe, I think so.

Zelot. Do not they rob then which take the liuing, and do not feede the flocke? Let me aske ye a question: If a man rob and steale, and then keepe a good house, and feast his neighboures with it, and be a murtherer, will his good house-keeping make him a good liuer?

Ath. No that it will not.

Zelot. Let me aske ye another question: Which is the worse murtherer, he which doth murther the body, or he which doth murther the soule?

Ash. He which doth murther the soule.

Zelot. Then he which should feede mens bodies, committed vnto him, and doth pine them to death, is a murtherer: and he which should feede mens soules, and doth sterue them, is a greater murtherer: and so his good house-keeping cannot make him a good man, robbing so many, and killing so many.

Ash. I will not beleeue that he doth kill any.

Zelot. That is because ye will not beleeue the saying of Christ: If the blind leade the blind, they both fall into the dith; nor, that God will saue men by the word preached.

Ash. I hope we be not blind, I trust we beleeue all well.

Zelot. You are blind, and should haue a guide to leade you the way to heauen, and to instruct you in true godlinesse.

Ash. I will not learne the way to heauen of any man; for I hope I haue as good a faith, and as good a soule Godward as the best learned of them all.

Zelot. Whereby do you trie your goodnesse and your faith, any other way then by your owne blinde fantacie?

Ash. I meane well: I hurt no man: nor I thinke no man any hurt: I loue God aboue all: and put my whole trust in him: what

what would ye haue more? they preach & teach, they can tell vs no more but this, when they haue all sayd what they can.

Zelot. Now you tumble it vp together indeede: I see well it is no small trouble to bring an ignorant man to see his follie.

Ath. I haue vttered my conscience: if I say not well, I am ready for to learne.

Zelot. What neede you learne, when you know all aforehand, euen as much as all the preachers can tell you?

Ath. You take me at the worst, the wisest of vs all may learne.

Zelot. You said, that you loue God aboue all, and you thinke no man no hurt: I take it your meaning is, that you loue God with all your heart, and your neighbour as your selfe, and more then this cannot be taught.

Ath. We should do this, if we do it not, God forgiue vs.

Zelat. This is all, is it not, what needeth any more teaching?

Ath. Let men do this first, and afterward if they will learne more, let them.

Zelat. You giue very graue aduice now, if there were any to follow it.

Ath. I haue no learning, but I thinke if men would do this, it would not be so euill as it is.

Zelot. If euery thing which is ſpoken truely, be ſpoken wiſely, then you haue vttered a verie wiſe ſaying: for I am ſure there cannot be a truer. I beleeue indeed you haue no learning, and I am ſure as you ſay, if men ſhould do that, there would not be ſo much tuill among vs.

Ath. **You thinke peraduenture that I ſpeake like a fole: I would I were as wiſe as thoſe which I heare ſay ſo.**

Zelot. Haue you many of theſe great wiſe men, which would haue men firſt fulfill the ten Commandements and, then run to heare Sermons?

Ath. **All things are well ſpoken which are well taken: if they be not wiſe, I pray God make them wiſe: I haue nought to do with them.**

Zelot. You are a plaine man, and haue skill in outward things, will you giue me leaue to aske you a queſtion in a matter wherein you haue vnderſtanding?

Ath. **I thanke God I dare anſwer to a queſtion.**

Zelot. Are you a carpenter or a maſon?

Ath. **I haue no ſkill that way.**

Zelot. Then if there be a great houſe of timber & ſtone to build, you cannot build it.

Ath. **If there were no better builders thē**

I, there would not be so many gay houses.

Zelot. If one should say, here is a very fayre house to be builded, it is no more but to lay a good foundation, to raise vp the wals and to finish the roofe, you know this is all: therefore you can build it, for you know all.

Ath. I know this is all: but I can do neuer a whit of it, vnlesse a carpenter or a builder do teach me.

Zelot. You say well: euen so to loue God with all our heart, with all our mind, and our neighbour as our selfe, is all, but we know not how to do one iot of it, vnlesse we be taught it out of Gods word.

Ath. God grant we may, for there be ouer many which do not regard it.

Zelot. Let me now aske you further, put the case one should say vnto you, thus: You know all that is to be done in building an house: the foundation, the walles, and the roofe, do these first, and if you will learne any more, you may go to some carpenter.

Ath. There is no man so foolish, to giue a man that counsell.

Zelot. It is the counsel your gaue, and the wise men which you speake of, which would haue men first to do, and afterward to learne.

Ath. Nay, to do that they know, and afterward to learne more: for, there was

neuer more knowledge, and leſſe doing.

Zelot. It is a very pitifull caſe to ſee, how the world is blinded; you bring not this out of your owne budget: for there be verie many wiſe and iolly heads, which ſtand much vpon this which you ſpeake: they neuer vnderſtood that which Salomō ſaith, Prouerbs 1. cap. 22. verſ. Ye fooles be enemies vnto knowledge, or hate knowledge. Neither do they know that which Saint Paul ſpeaketh 1. Corinth. 8. verſ. 2. If any man thinke he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing as yet, as he ought to knowe. They neuer conſidered what the holy Ghoſt ſaith in the latter end of the fifth Chapter to the Hebrewes and twelfth verſe, where he doth ſharply reproue them, becauſe they were children in vnderſtanding. Neither do they know that all well doing proceedeth from faith, and faith doth increaſe through knowledge: it grieueth me to ſtand vpon the matter, the ſaying is ſo buzzardlie.

Ath. **You would haue all men diuines, I thinke it is not for ploughmen to meddle with the Scriptures.**

Zelot. You thinke ſo, but I pray you to whom ſpeaketh the Lord by the Prophet Eſay, when he ſaith: My people periſh for want of knowledge. Vnto whom ſpeaketh

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the Lord by the Prophet Hoseas, cap. 4. 1. 2. when he saith: There is no truth, there is no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, but swearing, lying, killing, theeuing, committing adulterie, &c. Vnto whom wrote S. Paul, saying: Brethren be chidren in malice, be not children in vnderstanding? and vnto whom wrote S. Peter exhorting so much vnto knowledge?

Ath. I thinke knowledge doth make men the worse, for there be no worse men then many that be great Scripture men: none will deceiue a man sooner then they: they will speake a man faire before his face, and be ready behind his backe for to cut his throate.

Zelot. It seemeth that you are no small man, there is a great deale of good stuffe in you if you would vtter it.

Ath. I tell you my minde plainly, I will not flatter any man.

Zelot. You neede not tell me that, I know what maner of man you be. Let vs come to your last words, you did speake very lewdly: do you thinke that knowledge doth make men worse?

Ath. I heare many say so: if I speake lewdly, there be a number more besides me that do so.

Zelot. If knowledge make men the worse, then is it a thing that is not good of it selfe, for that which is good cannot make a man euill: is there any beast which will say, that to know God or the will of God, which is most holy and pure, can make a man the worse? No, these men are more then beasts. Againe, the more a man knoweth of God, the worse he should be; a very filthie blasphemy. Moreouer you are greatly deceiued, when you thinke that all those which can talke of the Scriptures haue knowledge; for there be very many carnall prelers, which seeme for to know much, and yet are as blind as buzzards: these are naughtie men, not because they haue knowledge, but because they want knowledge.

Ath. I cannot tell, a man shall heare them say a great deale out of the Bible.

Zelot. No doubt a great deale more then they vnderstand: now when such do not liue well, doth it follow that Gods word maketh them worse? nay you be all blind. Asses which cannot see, that because there is verie little true vnderstanding of Gods word among men, therfore there is so much vncleanesse. For as the holy Ghost saith, Psal. 119. 9. Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? euen by taking heed there-

to according to thy word. Now when men do not vnderstand the word, how shall they take heed to their wayes, for to guide them by the same? And when God saith, the word doth cleanse vs, his meaning must needes be, that all such that are not purged thereby, are foule and filthie in his eyes.

Ath. **You haue of your preachers, trim pulpit men, and can say very well, but their deedes are as euill as other mens, for who is more couetous then they? they are neuer content vntill they haue heaped liuing vpon liuing.**

Zelot. Such skilfull men as you, thinke if a man can preach, or rather (as a number do) prattle, and haue a rolling tongue, and can make some shew of learning, that by and by he is a trim man, and hath great knowledge, whereas indeed he hath no true knowledge. For I count him to haue true knowledge, which hath so learned Christ, that he is become a new creature. Therefore Saint Iohn the 3. Chapter, 5. 6. verses, of his first Epistle, speaking of Christ, saith, That he was made manifest to take away our sins, and in him is no sinne. Whosoeuer abideth in him sinneth not. Whosoeuer sinneth, hath not seene him nor knowne him. Likewise in the first booke of Samuel, Chapter 2. verse 12.

it is said by the sonnes of Ely, that they were the sonnes of Beliall, and knew not God: and yet they were instructed in the law, and taught the people. And for mine owne part I could neuer perceiue that any wicked man could preach worth a button: I meane concerning the chiefe thing required in preaching, which is the declaration of the power of the Spirit, which ought for to appeare, to the conuersion of sinfull men. For to lay open points of doctrine, they may do it wel.

Ath. It is not for vs that are simple men for to iudge who doth well, and who doth not.

Zelot Yes that it is, for saint Iohn saith; Trie the spirits whether they be of God: our Sauiour Christ saith, My sheepe heare my voice, a stranger they will not heare. Whereupon it doth follow, that he which knoweth not when pure doctrine and wholesome is vttered, is not as yet among the number of the sheepe of Christ. For if he were indued with the Spirit of God, he should by the same Spirit feele when wholesome doctrine is deliuered vnto him.

Ath. If a man be learned, then he shall be able to iudge what is said rightly: otherwise he cannot tell.

Zelot. It is not learning alone which must

iudge

iudge of ſound preaching; for there be many learned men which cannot iudge well, as alſo there be many vnlearned, which are very well able to diſcerne: all lieth in this point, the doctrine is of God, and not of men, and therefore thoſe do feele it and iudge rightly, whether they be learned or vnlearned, whom God doth inwardly teach with his Spirit. For this cauſe S. Paul, 1. Cor. 14. doth ſhew, that the word of God is ſo to be laid open in the congregation, that if there come in a man vnlearned or an infidell, he may be reproued and iudged, and the ſecrets of his heart made manifeſt. For if the word be not preached vnto the conſciences of men, it goeth away like a dead ſound. But we go into many matters, I haue not forgotten your former words: but perhaps you would be loth to come to that againe.

Ath. I am not aſhamed of any thing which I ſaid, and I hope I neede not.

Zelot. No, your wares are ſo fine, you neede not care who view them: you loue God aboue all, and with all your heart.

Ath. That I do, or elſe I were a beaſt, I would he were hanged which doth not that.

Zelot. You loue your neighbour as your ſelfe?

Ath. If I do not, I pray God forgiue me, I am sure no man can accuse me.

Zelot. Then you looke by this meanes to come to heauen?

Ath. I hope if there be but three in all this countrie go to heauen, I shall be one of them, I meane so well.

Zelot. You know the commandements of God, and fulfill them also, do you not?

Ath. I thanke God I know them, and will fulfill them as nigh as God shall giue me grace.

Zelot. Do you breake none of them?

Ath. We breake them all of vs dayly and hourely, for there is no man which can keepe them all.

Zelot. You breake some of them, and keepe other some. You keepe the greatest, do you not? and breake the least?

Ath. I keepe the greatest, and therefore I hope God will beare with me in the rest.

Zelot. Which do you take for to be the greatest, that you are so cleare in?

Ath. I am no theefe, nor murtherer, nor traitor, I pay euerie man his owne, I thinke this is Gods bidding.

Zelot. Are there no greater then these?

Ath. I take him for an honest man which

which doth keepe these, and he that doth not I defie him.

Zelot. Euen so will I take you to be when I know that you do keepe them: But I marueil you are so bold for to bid defiance to so many.

Ath. Do not you defie them all? and all other euill doers?

Zelot. If I should do so, you and I should be together by the eares by and by.

Ath. Then belike you count me to be such a one, you ought not to iudge.

Zelot. A man may know the tree by the fruits: but let this passe. I pray you tell me, is not he that hath moe Gods then one, as euill as a murtherer?

Ath. I take him to be worse.

Zelot. Then the first commandement is greater then those which you named?

Ath. If a man thinke there is any God but one, he is verie farre wide.

Zelot. You haue none other Gods but one then?

Ath. It were pitie of my life if I should not be of that beleefe. If all the commandements were as easie to be kept as this, we should do well.

Zelot. Then you neuer brake the first Commandement.

Ath. Neuer in all my life: neither shall euer any make me to be but of Gods beleefe: for they which beléeue that there be many gods, are not of a right mind.

Zelot. Can you then keepe the greater, and not the lesse? I do not doubt but if a man can keepe the first, he can keepe all: for the first is as hard as any of the rest, although such skilfull clerkes as you, count it to be verie easie.

Ath. Then it were an easie matter to keepe them.

Zelot. What if I proue vnto you that you breake it, will you confesse your folly?

Ath. I will neuer be made beléeue that which I know is contrary.

Zelot. Let me aske you this question: Whether that mā doth keepe this commandement, which thinketh there is but one God, and yet giueth that honour and worshippe vnto other things, which he should giue vnto him alone?

Ath. I did neuer put any trust in images, nor I neuer thought they could do me any good.

Zelot. I do not speake of that outward giuing away of Gods worshippe: but of another, which is inward in the mind.

Ath. I haue alwayes had God in my mind,

mind, and I truſt I haue neuer worſhipped any beſides him.

Zelot. Is not that a mans God which he loueth beſt, and which he doth moſt delight in?

Ath. Loke what a man loueth beſt, and taketh moſt delight in, I thinke he maketh that his God, becauſe he ought to loue God beſt.

Zelot. Do you not thinke, that the thing which a man moſt ſetteth his minde vpon, and moſt ſeekes after, is that which he moſt loueth?

Ath. I ſuppoſe euery man loketh after that which he moſt loueth.

Zelot. Then he which ſeeketh the world more then God, loueth the world more then God: and therefore in verie deede maketh the world his God.

Ath. God forbid that any man ſhould make more account of this world then of God, I hope few do ſo.

Zelot. You hope few do ſo, but a man may eaſily proue that you do ſo, and I am ſure the moſt do ſo.

Ath. I truſt you ſhal hardly proue it by me, although you iudge ſo euill of me.

Zelot. Can a man ſeeke after God, or ſet his delight vpon God any other way, then

by seeking after the knowledge and obedience of Gods will, which he hath reuealed in his word? or can a man loue God, and not loue his word?

Ath. **Gods word is good, we must loue that all of vs, and be ruled by it. for it doth tell vs nothing but that which is good.**

Zelot. How slily you wind out of the matter: I aske one thing which you do not answer, and that is, Whether a man can seeke God, and not seeke him in his word?

Ath. **Euerie man cannot be a Diuine, we that be vnlearned men are not for to meddle with so high matters.**

Zelot. Now you speake in your kind; We be vnlearned men, we haue nought to do with God, we may not meddle with him.

Ath. **You take all things wrong, you do not heare me say so.**

Zelot. Do I take you wrong, do you not say so? tell me, is not God as high a matter as his word?

Ath. **God is aboue all.**

Zelot. Can we haue to do with God, to serue him in any way but by his word?

Ath. **The word of God doth tell vs what we are to do.**

Zelot. Then it followeth, when you say we may not meddle with so high matters, that

that you were euen as good for to say, We haue nought to do with God: we owe him no dutie of obedience, we need not care to know his will: because he is as high a matter as his word.

Ath. You put in a great deale more then I said, and take me still at the worst.

Zelot. Nay, you are so deepe in your speech, that you vtter more in a word the a man can well lay opē in an houres talke. Againe, I take you not at the worst: for make the best of it you can, and it must needes follow, that those which care not for the word of God, care not for him; neither do they delight in him or loue him, which do not delight in nor loue his word. Moreouer how shall a man take delight for to know the word, but it will cause him for to seeke to know it? That which is a mans iewell, he will sometimes looke vpon it: but there are a number of you which are indeede very atheists, and set not a straw by the knowledge of God: for let a man tell you of any dutie which you should be taught out of the holy Scriptures, by and by this is your answer, Those things are not for vs to meddle withall: it is not for vs to talke of such points. But we are gone a great way from the beginning of this matter, which is, that where you did affirme, that

you loue God with all your heart, and that you haue none other Gods beſides him: now the concluſion is proued, that you loue him as much as an old ſhoe, and that indeed you make the world your God, becauſe you ſeeke moſt after that.

Ath. You do not vſe me well in ſaying, that I loue God no better then an old ſhoe: I would you ſhould know I loue him as well as the beſt of you all, though indéede I cannot ſay ſo much.

Zelot. Be not angrie man; for it is but a ſmall fault, for a great ſort more do beare you companie, you go not alone. But becauſe you make ſo great boaſt, I pray you tell me this, you haue ſeruants, haue you not?

Ath. I haue a poore houſhold.

Zelot. What do you require of your ſeruant?

Ath. To obey my will, and do that which I command him.

Zelot. What if he care not ſo much, as to know your will, but will ſay: I will not meddle with ſo high matters, nothing regarding to know your pleaſure: will you ſay he loueth you, or he is a good ſeruant?

Ath. I cannot ſay that he is a good ſeruant; for if he were, he would not take ſcorne, but be glad to heare my will.

Zelot.

Zelot. You say right: but why do you not consider, that when God hath set downe his wil, and you care not for to know it, that you loue him as well and do him as good seruice, as such a seruant should do vnto you?

Ath. God helpe, if this which you say be true.

Zelot. It is most true, not onely that men make the world their God, because they seeke more after it then they do after Gods kingdome, but also S. Paul calleth the Diuell the god of this world, as also in another place he saith; there be some whose god is their bellie.

Ath. God forbid that any man should take the diuell to be God, or do him such honour.

Zelot. They are no small number which make him their god.

Ath. You may say so, but I could neuer come into that mans company yet, which would not vtterly defie him.

Zelot. If I should professe great kindnesse vnto you now, and in the meanetime draw my dagger and breake your pate, would you beleeue I were your friend?

Ath. I pray God keep me fro such frieds, which giue good words, and do euill deeds: I had rather they told me their hatred.

Zelot. Then you answer, that we must not looke what men say, but what they do?

Ath. **They had better not speake well, then speake well, and do euill.**

Zelot. Likewise I answer you, that we must not looke to mens words, when they defie the diuell, but to their deeds, by which they obey him and do his will: for when they defie him in their words, they honour him for God in their works.

Ath. **If there be any such, I pray God amend them, for that is the worst which I wish them.**

Zelot. I could like your prayer well, if it were not for a fashion, as you vse many such like. For when it cometh to the triall, you wil easily be found among the number of such.

Ath. **If you thinke me to be such a one, you iudge worse then euer any man did: I thanke God I can bring many to testifie that I am an honest man, and alwayes haue bene; I will be found as good as your selfe, though you finde so great fault with other, as though you were not like other men.**

Zelot. I iudge nothing but that which is easie to see in you and in a number more, and which I can and will proue to your face.

Ath. **You are a stranger vnto me: wil**

you

you iudge of me, and know not what my workes are?

Zelot. He which cannot ſpie you, hath but a ſimple vnderſtanding: I pray you tell me, ſuch as do the works and will of the Diuell, are they not of the Diuell? S. Iohn 1. Epiſt. 3. ſaith, He that committeth euill is of the Diuell, Likewiſe our Sauiour Chriſt telleth the obſtinate Iewes, Ioh. 8. which boaſted themſelues to be the children of Abraham, and the children of God, that they were of their father the Diuell: and why? becauſe they did his will. Euen ſo you that take part with ſuch as are euill and wicked, ſhall I aske you a little queſtion?

Ath. **Yea, aſke what you will, and iudge what you like beſt: but I will anſwer as well as I can.**

Zelot. Do you not thinke that all whoremaiſters, drunkards, dicers, railers, ſwearers, and ſuch like, are the Diuels armie, as on the other ſide, ſuch as profeſſe Gods word, and liue godly, are his ſouldiers, and do fight vnder his banner?

Ath. **They are well holpen vp which ſerue ſuch a maiſter.**

Zelot. Why are you ſo vnwiſe then as to ſerue him? for all thoſe which take part with thoſe wicked men, & raiſe vpon thoſe which

are godly, do fight vnder the same standard and seeke to vphold the kingdome of the Diuell, labouring for to ouerthrow the Gospell, and to banish Gods word.

Ath. **They are worthie to haue their eares cut from their head, which raile vpon honest men, or seeke to slander them.**

Zelot. This is a common thing among all the packe of you: if there be any man which hath a care to know God, and seeke after his word, and will not commit those beastly sins which ouerflow in al places, then you which cannot abide to haue Gods word set forth, deuise a number of lies and slanders against them, calling them Puritanes, rascals, and many such like. On the contrarie part, let a man be a common drunkard, a dicer, an ignorant beast which hath no knowledge of God, a wretched worlding, or any kind of such person, he is an honest man: for they be those whom you would haue a man lose his eares for: he is now counted the honestest man which liueth as the most do.

Ath. **There be a number go so far they cannot tel what they may do: they will not do as their honest neighbours do, they wil be wiser then their betters, what should they meddle with Gods word: it maketh them busie in checking euery man. It**

was

was neuer merrie since men vnlearned haue medled with the Scriptures.

Zelot. I maruell how farre you would go, if a man should follow you; you are like a puddle, which the more a man stirreth it, the more filthie mud ariseth: you are like a sinke, where the more a man stirreth, the more is the stinke.

Ath. What meane you by that?

Zelot. I meane that your heart is full of foule stinking and rotte matter, which floweth out at your mouth. I confesse that those men be not to be allowed, which meddle with that which they should not: but I know whom you meane, when you say they go so farre, that they know not what they may do: you speake of them which seeke to know God, whom you thinke to be halfe mad.

Ath. There be some of them which are not booke-learned, what should they do otherwise then their fathers before them? I knew some of their fathers, honest men, and neuer troubled themselues that way.

Zelot. I did know your mind wel enough: for al your spite is against those which learne out of Gods word to know their dutie towards the Lord: and because, as saint Peter saith, 1. Pet. 4. they do not run with you to

the same excesse of riot, you think it strange, and blaspheme. Againe, you cannot abide to be admonished, when you commit any naughtie thing: you know not that God hath appointed his word for all sorts of men to be instructed in it throughly; for the holy Apostles exhort euerie where vnto great knowledge in the word. Againe, you know not that which the Lord commandeth in sundrie places, that we should admonish and reproue one another, if anie do amisse: and not as you blind obstinate men, which when a man doth after a godly manner admonish you, he is by and by a busie medler, what hath he to do, he shall not answer for you. And because you may not do what leudnesse you list vncontrolled, you say it was neuer merrie since euerie man might reade the Scriptures. It is maruellous that men should so become beasts without all vnderstanding.

Ath. It would not greeue me to be reproued by those which are learned, but now euery Iacke will be meddling.

Zelot. If you be reproued iustly by Gods word, then is it God which doth reproue, you are not to looke vpon the man: but when you call them Iackes, and giue them other reproches, it is because you are blind, and can discerne nothing but that which is

of this world: for if you could see how great glorie the poorest true Christian is called vnto, to be the child of God, you would not reuile those whom God honoureth.

Ath. They will be medling in small matters; if it were for great matters it were somewhat, but a man may not be merrie now.

Zelot. Being vtterly blinde, and void of grace, you count those sins which are foule and grosse to be small: swearing, rayling, talking in your filthie ribaldrie, singing foule and beastly songs, these and such like are your pettie faults: this is your mirth, which must not be hindred: for it is death to you to haue any godlinesse spoken of, if it be, you cannot be merrie, This dunghill mirth is that which men complaine of to be molested, and say it was happie in old time, when men were not reproued for such things, now there be so many Scripture men, that a man cannot tell what to say or what to do.

Ath. There are none of you all as holy as you would seeme for to be, but haue faults; you see not your owne, but other mens.

Zelot He which doth not repent and correct his owne vicious nature, and striue to obey God, is no good reprouer of others:

but when you say, men seeme to be holy, and giue it as a matter of reproch, therein you go almost beyond the diuell himselfe: for you see that I gainesay you, or else you would not endure it, but you would euen poure out your stinking and rotten poyson like blasphemous and venimous beasts: you would speake after this maner, You that are so full of the Spirit, you that are Saints, and such like. What are you, diuels, are you of the flesh? no doubt you are, vntill God conuert you. But we may see how diuellishly men are become wicked: when a man cannot make any appearance to be godly and holy, but it is reproched, as though it were a shamefull thing to be led by the Spirit. For otherwise why do they so obiect, an honest thing to liue after the flesh, a shamefull matter to be guided by the Spirit?

Ath. **God helpe vs if none be good but such, I hope honest and quiet men shall be saued as well as they, although they cannot talke so well, nor runne not to heare sermons.**

Zelot. Nay, you would haue others in better case then they, for you iudge them that are zealous in the Gospell, and would fainest of all other please God, to be the worst men, and the more careful a man is to be ho-

lie

ly to the Lord, the more he is disdained and misliked; which doth euidently shew, that such as you are led by the spirit of the diuell. You leade me so from one matter to another, that we are gone from something which you vttered. I remember you said, you put your whole trust in God.

Ath. **I said so, and so I say still: though I haue no learning, yet I trust I beléeue as well as any Scripture man of them all.**

Zelot. You brag verie boldlie, I praie you tell me this, are you sure you shall be saued?

Ath. **No, nor you neither, nor the best of you all; we must commit that to God.**

Zelot. What is it that you put all your whole trust in him for? Is it not this, that God hath promised vnto you eternall life, & that you beleeue he will performe his promise?

Ath. **That he doth loue me, and giue me all things.**

Zel. Are you not sure that he doth loue you?

Ath. **I hope he doth loue me, but I am not sure.**

Zelot. Doth not the Scripture say, that whosoeuer doth trust in him shall be saued?

Ath. **God saith so indéede, and I beléeue it is so.**

Zelot. You know; do you not, that you put your whole trust and beleefe in him?

Ath. I know I do: and I hope I shall alwayes do.

Zelot. If God cannot lie, when he saith, all that trust in him shall be saued, and you know that you put your whole trust in him, wherefore do you not then know that you shall be saued?

Ath. That which God saith is true, for he cannot lie: I put my trust in none but in him. I hope to be saued, what would you haue more? I will beleeue neuer a one of them all, when they say they know they shall be saued: I thinke they would make themselues Gods.

Zelot. Nay, such as you make your selues Gods, when you ioyne things so contrarie together, and can make them agree: fire and water may lodge together in one bed at your inne, and agree well together; for they are no more contrarie then that which you affirme, when you say, God hath promised that all which beleeue in him shall be saued: you are sure you beleeue in him, and that you put all your whole trust in him, and yet you cannot tell whether you shall be saued. But I cannot greatlie maruell at this, for you know as well what faith is, as doth a goose.

Ath. I trust I know, and I meane well, God knoweth my meaning howsoeuer

soeuer you take me.

Zelot. Let me aske you this question: When a man prayeth, if he do not beleeue that which he saith, doth he well?

Ath. **We must beléeue that which we speake when we pray, or else it is nothing worth.**

Zelot. When Christ teacheth vs to pray and to call God our Father, ought we not to know that he is our Father?

Ath. **We ought to know that which God teacheth vs, and to beléeue the same.**

Zelot. Must we not beleeue it without doubting or wauering? as saint Iames saith, He that doubteth is like vnto a waue of the sea tossed with the wind, neither let that man thinke that he shall receiue anie thing.

Ath. **We must not doubt, for he that doubteth is in a wrong beléefe: we must put all our trust in God.**

Zelot. Then when you call God Father, you beleeue that surelie which you speake; then are you sure that he loueth you, for a father doth loue his chid, euen men which are euill do giue good gifts vnto their children when they aske, because they loue them; much more the heauenly Father which is perfectly good, doth loue his children, that is, those which beleeue in him. Then I reason

in this wise: He that beleeueth surelie that God is his Father, he is sure that God loueth him: he that is sure God loueth him, is sure of euerlasting life: therefore all those which pray aright, are sure they shall be saued.

Ath. I pray God we may call vpon him.

Zelot. Tell me further what you thinke, was not Abraham sure he should be saued, likewise Dauid, Paul, and others?

Ath. Euerie man cannot be like those. Can you say you are like vnto Abraham?

Zelot. Doth not the Scripture say, that Abraham is the father of the faithfull, and that those are the children of God, which walke in the steps of faithfull Abraham? I confesse indeede that euerie one cannot attaine to so great a measure of faith as those had: but yet we must come to the same faith, because we haue the same God, the same couenant & promises, the same Spirit is giuen vnto vs which beleeue. S. Paul in the 4. chapter to the Ephesians saith: There is one God, one faith, one baptisme. If there be but one, then ours must be the same that theirs was.

Ath. Yea, but for all that it is presumption for men to say, they know they shall be saued.

Zelot.

Zelot. I see that Popish dung doth sticke still betweene your teeth, when they teach men, that it is presumptio to be out of doubt.

Ath. What tell you me of the Pope? I care not for him, I would both he and his dung were buried in the dunghill.

Zelot. I know there be manie that care not for the Pope, but yet beleeue much of his doctrine: they be those which we call atheists, of no religion, but looke whatsoeuer any Prince doth set forth, that they will professe.

Ath. I thinke that is good: ought not we to obey our Princes? and would you haue vs to take vpon vs to be wiser then they and their Counsellers?

Zelot. I did know you were an atheist, setting vp men in the place of God, worse then a Turke.

Ath. Wherefore do you say so?

Zelot. Tell me this: Are we for to obey men, if they command that which is contrarie to that which God commandeth?

Ath. I thinke not so.

Zelot. Is there any moe then one truth, or one religion, which is the right, and that which God commandeth?

Ath. There can be but one truth, that is certaine.

Zelot. Then when one Prince commandeth one religion, another ariseth afterward and commandeth the contrarie: will you without difference obey them both? is not this for to denie God? is not this for to be worse then a Turke?

Ath. **I am sure you will not denie, but that we must obey.**

Zelot. He which doth disobey the Prince, doth disobey God vnto his damnation, where the Prince setteth forth and maintaineth Gods word. But if there be a Prince which maketh lawes against the lawes of God, we must obey God rather then men. But there are manie as I said before, which in any Princes dayes will speake thus: If religion should turne (say they) as God forbid it should, but if it do, it is our parts to be obedient. Are not these atheists? haue they not denied God, when they set men in his place, and looke no higher but what men command? But you haue drawne me away againe from the matter we were in hand with, where you said, it is presumption for a man to say, he knoweth he shall be saued: I may aske you a question, I know you will answer verie boldlie.

Ath. **I know no cause why I should not answer boldly.**

Zelot.

Zelot. You say true; for blind bayard is the boldest horse in the cart, although he be almost drowned in one slow, yet he will not sticke at another, he will through when all the rest will straine curtesie, But let vs come to the matter: whether is it greater presumption for to beleeue that God is true, or for to doubt of the certaintie of his promise? and whether doth that man honour God most which giueth credit to his word, or he which doubteth whether he will performe the same?

Ath. **It must needes be granted, that he which beleeueth God on his word doth well, and he that doth not, doth euill.**

Zelot. You say true; for if a Prince make an offer vnto some man whom he fauoureth, and he should make answer, I doubt of it, I scarce beleeue the performance of your promise: would not the Prince thinke himselfe greatly dishonoured, to haue it doubted, whether he be a man of his word? If he should sweare for the performance of his promise, and the party not trust him, he would neuer put that vp, or beare such an iniurie. Then it must needes follow, that when God hath bound himselfe both by promise and by oath, as it is said Heb. cap. 6. ver. 17. how great presumption is it, not for

to beleeue him it is all one as to thinke God may lie, or that he may be forsworne, which is horrible blasphemie.

Ath. I grant this is true, if God should tell any man that he should be saued, if he did not then beleeue him. But where is that man which can say, God euer told him so? Doth he tell any one man so?

Zelot. Yea that he doth, for that which he sendeth vnto all in generall, he sendeth vnto euerie one in particular: for is it not all one, if a man be condemned for treason, to haue his pardon sent him being but one man alone, or hauing a great fort moe condemned vnto death with him, a generall pardon is sent for them all?

Ath. That is all one; for he hath his part in it.

Zelot. Euen so it is betweene God and vs: we were all condemned, he hath sent a generall pardon to as many as beleeue the same, that whosoeuer trusteth in Christ, he shall be saued. God therefore hath told some men, that is, such as beleeue, that they shall be saued, and such as doubt of his promise and his oath, they shall be damned. Therefore it is all one in those which beleeue, as if he had sent a particular message vnto them.

Ath. I neuer heard so much in all my

my life before.

Zelot. I beleeue so: for S. R. can no great skill in this geare: he can whip ouer a new payre of cards nimbly, and tyrle a dye: but he should be the messenger of the Lord of hostes, euen as the Prophet saith: His lips should keepe knowledge, and men should enquire at his mouth: he should open all the counsel of God vnto the people, and not let them run headlong as they do vnto destruction: he should instruct them in all the doctrine of faith and repentance, and so guide them in the feare of God.

Ath. All men cannot do alike, we must accept their good will, euery man cannot be a Preacher.

Zelot. Because you care not for seeking after eternall life, you are content to accept of nothing: and because you loue your lusts, and hate to be reformed, you abhorre the vse of preaching, and as poore a man as you are, you would not for xl. shillings you had a Preacher among you.

Ath. You euer take me at the worst, I allow preaching, it is good now and then; but some can keepe no measure, nor tel whē they haue done. Againe, they be ouer hot and seuere, and preach damnation to the people. Likewise they meddle with such

matters as they neede not, as Election and Predestination: what should such matters be spoken of among the people: they make men worse.

Zelot. I thinke the diuell is the cunningest schoolmaister in the world: other schoolmaisters cannot bring grosse heads and dullards to any passe, but content themselues with the finer wits, for to traine them vp in learning: but a man can almost light vpon none of his schollers, be they neuer such blockheads, but they haue their lesson at their fingers ends.

Ath. I thanke you Sir for your good word: but I neuer learned it of the diuell, nor neuer was any of his schollers: I trust I haue as little to do with him as any of you all.

Zelot. Where did you learne it then, if not of the diuell?

Ath. I haue heard honest men speake it, and some Preachers preach it.

Zelot. Then I perceiue you learned it not of the diuell himselfe, but at the mouth of some of his Vshers.

Ath. Wherefore do you call them the diuels Vshers: they haue skill in the word of God, and ought to know what they say.

Zelot. I call them so because they teach the

the preceps of the diuell: and although they haue some knowledge in the word, yet they neuer learned these things which you speake out of the word.

Ath. Did the diuell teach them, because they haue it not in Gods word?

Zelot. It is the doctrine of the diuell, because it is against Gods word. For God neuer teacheth men those things which are contrarie to the doctrine which he hath set downe in his word.

Ath. I thinke you will hardly proue these things to be against Gods word.

Zelot. I would you could as easily proue your selfe to be a good man: for then we should soone agree.

Ath. You are not for to iudge of me, no more then I am to iudge of you: but there be many now adayes which will take vpon them for to iudge other men: they do not learne that out of Gods word, I am sure.

Zelot. If I see a man drunken, or heare him sweare, or raile, and such like, and say, he is a naughtie man, do I iudge? shall I account him a good man, when I see he is naught?

Ath. When a man doth see those naughty vices, he may boldly say that such men are naught.

Zelot. In like maner when a man heareth one which holdeth euill and abhominable opinions againſt the truth, he may as boldlie ſay, he is naught: becauſe they haue giuen iudgement of themſelues, and haue ſhewed what they are. Nay, they be ſuch as you which take vpō you for to iudge: for let a mā be more carefull thē your ſelues for to ſerue God, and by and by you will enter into the ſecrets of his heart, which God onely doth know, & you will not ſtick for to pronounce that he is an hypocrite. In the meane time, let a man tell you that you are wicked, when he doth ſee your wickedneſſe, you anſwer; you ought not to iudge. But I will come for to proue, that the things which you ſpeake againſt preaching, are very diuelliſh & wicked. You ſay thus, I allow preaching, it is good now and then, but ſome can keepe no meaſure, nor will neuer haue done.

Ath. I ſaid ſo indéede, I will not denye my woꝛd, and I thinke ſo ſtill. Foꝛ a man may haue ouer much of any thing, and inough is as good as a feaſt

Zelot. A verie little is inough for you: if the Preacher do paſſe his houre but a little, your buttockes begin for to ake, and you wiſh in your heart, that the pulpet would fall.

Ath.

Ath. You may gueſſe twiſe before you gueſſe ſo right.

Zelot. Nay, I can gueſſe ſomewhat neare in ſuch a man as you are: but I pray you, did you neuer ſit at cardes all night?

Ath. Yes that I haue, and thought it but a ſhort night to.

Zelot. The cauſe why you thinke an houre ſo long at a Sermon, and a whole night ſo ſhort at cardes, is, that you delight in the one, and care not for the other: the carding is ioyned with much ſinne and ſeruice of the diuell; the other is for to bring vs vnto the knowledge and feare of God. Marke now how much by your owne confeſſion, you loue the diuell more then God: for him do you loue moſt, whom you delight to ſerue moſt.

Ath. Can we not ſerue God without ſo much preaching? I ſée they are neuer the better which run moſt after ſermons, they talke much, but I would haue them leaue talking and fall to doing; we ſée no doing, but men are ſtill euen as euill as before.

Zelot. Can your ſeruant ſerue you vnleſſe he know your will?

Ath. No that he cannot.

Zelot. No more can you ſerue God without the knowledge of his will: and as for the

reſt of your ſpeech, whē you crie out againſt preaching of Gods word, that it maketh mē neuer the better, and you would haue them leaue talking, and fall to doing: I confeſſe there be a number which are counterfeit profeſſors, which liue not according to the Goſpell, and moſt commonly they be ſuch, as haue but a little ſmacke of the Goſpell, and yet thinke they know much; becauſe they want the meanes, hauing the word either ſeldome or looſly preached. But I will confute your vanitie another way in this point, tell me, are not theſe your ſayings? where the word is ſincerely preached, if any ſeeke to frame their liues after the ſame, when they do either by word reproue your euill wayes; or by deede refuſe your lewd manners: theſe men are full of the Spirit, theſe are preciſe fellowes, theſe are holy Saints, theſe thinke themſelues Gods fellowes: theſe thinke themſelues better then all other men?

Ath. We ſay ſo indeede, there is good cauſe why.

Zelot. Then I pray you tell me how theſe two things can hang together, when you ſay there is no amendment of life, and yet you complaine that they be ouer ful of the ſpirit, ouer preciſe, and ſuch like. May not euerie

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man see, that you pronounce things directly contrarie the one to the other? that there is no amendment, and yet in effect you say, they amend ouer fast.

Ath. We do not say, that any do amend ouer fast.

Zelot. When you say they are ouer holy, and what should men be so curious, and full of the Spirit, what is this but to say, that they amend ouer fast? Is not this to amend, when men by due instruction out of Gods word come to repentance of their former vices, and haue a care to keepe themselues from the spots of the rotten flesh and filthie world? Do not you & such as you are after a sort blaspheme, when you reproch men with the Spirit? Is it a shame for a man now adayes for to haue any thing to do with the Spirit of God? While a man doth walke after the flesh in the lusts of vncleannesse, he is an honest man: but so soone as he is endued with any grace, you wonder at him as crowes do at an owle, you are readie to flout and mocke him out of his skinne: and as if the Spirit of God were a Spirit of dishonour and shame, you mocke men with him. We may wonder at the long patience of God, which hath thus many yeares suffered himselfe to be dishonoured, his Spirit reuiled, his word despised,

and hath not bene reuenged; but no doubt the longer he hath tarried, the heauier will the stroke be.

Ath. **When are men, what should they make themselues more holy then they be?**

Zelot. If you meane one way, you say right: for it is a naughtie vice for men to seeme to be holie when they are not, or to seeme to be more holie then they be: but if you meane another way (as I thinke you do) that because men are sinfull by nature, why should they seeke for to be better, then do you speake verie wickedlie: for God calleth men to repentance, to turne from their euill wayes: God guideth his seruants at al times with his Spirit, therefore S. Paul saith, Rom. 8. There is no condemnation now to those which are in Christ Iesus, which walke not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. And againe in the same Chapter: As many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sonnes of God. He saith, that if we liue after the flesh, we shall die; in other places he doth shew, which are the workes of the Spirit, & which are the works of the flesh; and you like blasphemous wretches allow those which walke after the flesh, and condemne those which are led by the Spirit.

Ath. **Are none moued with Gods Spi-**

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rit, but such as run to heare preaching?

Zelot. Whosoeuer hath the Spirit of God, cannot but delight in the word of God; which the same Spirit hath vttered. The Lord saith, He which is of God, heareth Gods word. The happie man is he (as we haue in the 1. Psalme) which hath his delight in the Law of the Lord, and which doth meditate in the same day and night. We haue in the Psalme 112. Blessed is the man which feareth the Lord, he hath great delight in his commandements.

Moreouer, the Spirit of God doth not guide men without the word: and therefore it is said Psalme 119. Thy word is a lanterne vnto my feete, and a light vnto my pathes. Saint Peter saith, 1. Epistle 1. He hath begotten vs againe, not of mortall but of immortall seede; which he affirmeth to be the word of God that endureth for euer. Likewise Saint Iames saith, chap. 1. Of his owne good will begate he vs by the word of truth. Seeing therefore that the holie Ghost doth guide men by the word, it followeth, that all those which set light by the word, are led, not with the Spirit of God, but with the spirit of the diuell. I might alledge a number of testimonies of Scripture to proue, that such as you which make so small account of the sacred

word of God (as there be a number, yea the greatest number, which do not set so much by it as they do by an old shoe) are despisers of God, worse then brute beasts.

Ath. Cannot men be led by Gods Spirit, and serue God, vnlesse they know the Scriptures? God forbid that all those should be awry which are not learned: is it not enough for plaine countrie men, plowmen, taplours, and such other, for to haue their ten cõmandements, the Lords prayer, and the beleefe? I thinke these may suffise vs, what should we medle further? I know men which are no Scripture men, which serue God as well as the best of the all, will you condemne such?

Zelot. I said before, that men can not be led by Gods Spirit, and refuse to know the Scriptures: neither can they truly serue him vntill such time as they know how for to serue him: for God teacheth how he will be serued, and he teacheth onely in his word. His will is that we shall learne to know him by his word: and therefore he hath appointed the Ministerie of the word to cõtinue for euer in his Church, that by it men may be built vp in Christ, as you may reade Ephe. 4. For this cause S. Paul exhorteth Timothie to be instant in teaching, in season and out

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of season: he trauelled himselfe night & day; he maketh a verie feruent prayer to God continually for the Colossians, that they might be fulfilled with the knowledge of his will in all wisedome and spiritual vnderstanding, Col. 1. 9. For this cause he exhorteth the Christians to be children in malice, but not to be children in vnderstanding. The holy Ghost doth sharplie reproue the Hebrues as we may see in the latter end of the 5. chap. of that Epistle, because they were yet children to be taught, when for the time they should haue bene teachers. Againe, there is a notable sentence in the beginning of the second chapter of the Prouerbs, where a man may plainly proue, that none can come to the feare of God, but such as do earnestly endeuour to know God. The words be these: My son, if thou receiue my words, and hide my commandements with thee, to incline thine eares to wisedome, and to bow thy heart to vnderstanding: if thou call for vnderstanding, and vtter thy voice for knowledge: if thou seeke her as siluer, and dig for her as for hid treasures: then shalt thou vnderstand the feare of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. If a man do not receiue the word and commandements of God vttered by his Ministers, if he do not keepe and

lay them vp, if he do not cry and call vpon God for vnderstanding, if he do not incline his eares and bend his heart thereto, if he do not search and dig for her as men do for treasures, he shall not come to the knowledge of the feare of God.

Ath. **All men cannot come to these things which you speake of.**

Zelot. All men which will please God must come thus farre, that they can say with the Prophet Dauid in the 119. Psalme, I haue hidden thy word in my heart, that I might not sinne against thee. Also in the same place when he hath asked the question: Wherewithall a yong man shall clense his wayes, he answereth, By taking heede thereto according to thy word: whereby it is most euident, that all those are vnpure in their waies, and sin grieuously against God, which haue not laid vp his word in their harts, nor cleansed their wayes by the same. But let vs come to some other of your sayings, which I am greeued to heare.

Ath. **You neede not to be greeued, for I do not hurt you;**

Zelot. I can not but be greeued to see your grosse and palpable bindnesse: and I am the more greeued when I remember, that many which are otherwise verie wise men, vse much

much your doltish sayings, and thinke they speake very wisely. They say, What should vnlearned men meddle further then to say their ten commandements, the Lords prayer, and the articles of the faith? and you are of the same mind.

Ath. **I trust to do as well with these, as other with all their learning.**

Zelot. Do you thinke that you shall do well euen because you can say them, although you do not vnderstand them?

Ath. **Nay, if a man say them, and do not vnderstand them, he is litle the better: I know not why I should not vnderstand them, so long as God hath giuen me my fiue wits: I am no child, no? I am no foole.**

Zel. Indeed he that hath one good wit is no foole, much lesse are you which haue fiue: you must needes know all and more: for I thinke you meane, that you are able by reason to vnderstand those things.

Ath. **I trust I vnderstand by that reason which God hath giuen me, so much as is sufficient: I can tell when I do well, and I can tell when I do euill.**

Zelot. I perceiue you are a free-will man, one of those which thinke by natural vnderstanding to cõceiue the mysteries of God: & you do indeed vnderstand so much as is suffi-

cier, not for to saue you, but as S. Paul saith, Rom. 1. to make you without excuse, and so to condemne you. You know some sins: and likewise you can tell some things which are good, but you can neuer tell any thing which you haue done that is good.

Ath. **I trust God will be more fauourable then you are: and that he will not forget the good deedes which I haue done.**

Zelot. A very little boxe I warrant you will hold all your deeds, if you haue no moe old deeds then you haue good deeds.

Ath. **Are not these good deeds, when a man doth giue to the poore, and is ready to do his neighbour a good turne? when a man doth liue honestly, serue God, and thinke no man any harme?**

Zelot. Now you speake of cost: now you are hit in your right veine againe, euē where you would be, to boast of those things which you haue not: for none of al those or such like are good in you, because they do not proceede of faith: for S. Paul saith, Rom. 14. ver. 23. Whatsoeuer is not of faith is sin.

Ath. **How can you proue that mine are not of faith?**

Zelot. Faith is by hearing, and hearing by the word, Rom. 10. 17. where a man despiseth the word, there can be no faith: because

cause faith is grounded vpon the word, and doth not beleeue things contrary vnto the word. Moreouer, they be not your fiue wits (as you terme them) which can make you able for to vnderstād the mysteries of Gods word: for they cannot be vnderstood, as S. Paul teacheth, 1. Corinth. 2. 11. vnlesse God reueale them by his Spirit: for euen the wicked which seeme to know them, do not know them aright. But let vs come for to see how well you do vnderstand the ten cōmandements: do you not looke to come to heauen by doing of them?

Ath. I do them as nigh as God will giue me grace, I trust God will not require more at my hands then I am able for to do: I am as he made me: if he had made me able for to do better, I should do more.

Zelot. Now you are, in a deepe peece of diuinitie, you thinke this is so equall which you vtter now, that all the Doctors in the world are not able for to controll you. You say, you do what you can, more God cannot require at your hands: you meane as if one should make this comparison: A father can require no more of his child then his strength will serue; a Prince can command his subiect no impossible thing: if a father

should whip his child for not doing that which he is not able, it were crueltie; if a Prince should put a subiect to death for not doing his commandement in a matter vnpossible, it were tyrannie: the father will say: My child did his good will, I can aske no more: the Prince will say, he hath done that which a man might, and further I cannot require. Likewise you thinke God should deale straightlie with you, if he should condemne you for breaking the Law, which you are not able to obserue; and that he cannot looke for more at your hands then he hath made you able to performe.

Ath. **I meane so indeed, flesh is fraile, we cannot do all things.**

Zelot. I pray you tell me, do you thinke anie shall go to hell and be damned?

Ath. **The Scripture saith, there shall, doth it not?**

Zelot. Wherefore do you thinke they shall be damned?

Ath. **For breaking Gods commandements.**

Zelot. Are they able to keepe them.

Ath. **No man is able to keepe them.**

Zelot. Shall they then be damned for euer in hell fire, for breaking those lawes which they were not able to keepe?

Ath.

Ath. Not if they had done their good will: for then they could not be blamed.

Zel. How the diuell hath muffled you, to keepe you from seeing the danger of eternal damnation which you are in: haue you neuer heard that which God saith by Moses, which Saint Paul citeth in the 3. chap. to the Galathians, Cursed is euerie one which abideth not in all things which are written in the booke of the Law for to do them? By which you may see that God with his one mouth doth lay his curse (which is damnation) vpon euerie one, which doth breake neuer so little of the Law.

Ath. God is mercifull, he is not so seuere as you would make him to be.

Zelot. Do you not thinke that he is a iust and a true God?

Ath. I must needs thinke so.

Zelot. Do you thinke that when he hath vttered his iustice, that he can by his mercie go from it, and so be found vntrue? Nay, there be many of you which in all things crie, God is mercifull, God is mercifull, which neuer consider with what conditions God hath promised mercie, neither how it may stand with his iustice and truth: you thinke God offereth mercie without exception.

Ath. If God be not mercifull, we are but in an euill case.

Zelot. He is a most mercifull and gracious God, but yet not vnto anie but such as he hath promised mercie. How many thousands there be which are caried headlong to hell with this' errour, which not knowing the iustice and truth of God, do blesse themselues, where God hath accursed them? For these things which you haue now vttered, are euen of the principall reasons which Satan doth seduce men withall and hold them from the truth. They thinke thus, I do what I can, God hath made me able to do no better, God is mercifull: they know not this, that God made vs able in our first creation to keepe and obey his will whollie, and that although we can now keepe no part of it, yet he may iustlie accurse and condemne vs vnto eternall fire, for transgressing any part of it. You are not as he made you, and therfore you deceiue your selfe when you thinke that he requireth no more at your hands, thē you are now able for to do. You deceiue your selfe, when you thinke that God can be mercifull vnto you, and you liue without repentance.

Ath. You would make a man despaire, if you would put him out of hope in the mercy

mercy of God.

Zelot. I would not bring you out of hope in the mercy of God, but I would bring you out of your vaine hope, which is not that which will saue you, but doth harden and blinde you vnto damnation.

Ath. **How can a mans hope and faith in God harden and blinde him vnto damnation? Now adayes there is nothing among many of you but damnation, damnation. It is well that God hath not giuen you power to condemne men.**

Zelot. If it were a true faith, it must needs saue them, but being a faith which is blind, it blindeth those which haue it, and hardeneth them in their sins, and keepeth them from the seeking after the knowledge of Gods will, and staieth them from returning home vnto God by true repentance, because it breedeth this in the hearts of men, to thinke and to say; We are well enough, we trust in Gods mercie, we beleeue as well as the best of them all: when as if they were rid out of this notable snare of the diuell, and brought for to see the wrath of God bent against them, they would then be glad with feare and trembling to seeke after the Lord in his word, and to be afraid to commit those things which might displease him: whereas

now a mã may crie vntill he rend his throate againſt their contempt of the Lords word, and againſt their foule ſins, before he can moue them at all: and why? becauſe the diuel hath gotten them within his fortreſſe: God is mercifull, God is mercifull. And for your other fooliſh words, that there is now nothing but damnation, damnation: do you thinke that men are euer the ſooner caſt into damnation, becauſe they are told of the great danger thereof?

Ath. **I pray you let me ſée what good can come thereof.**

Zelot. If I ſhould meete you by the way, and perceiue that you were going into the way where you ſhould light among theeues which would murther you: which were moſt profitable for you, if I ſhould tell you thus: You will be well, you will be well; or to ſhew you that you be in danger of your life, if you paſſe that way?

Ath. **That were a wicked part, for to let a man go where he ſhould loſe his life, and not to tell him.**

Zelot. Wherefore do you not ſee then, that thoſe which do ſhew you the danger of damnation, do it for your profite, as well as they which teach you to auoid ſome outward danger. If a man tell you thus, Go not

that

that way, you wil be robbed, you will be killed; doth it follow that he wil rob or kil you? becauſe you ſay, men now vtter damnation, and that it is well they haue not power to condemne men. And know this for certaine, that if God in his word do threaten damnation, and the Preacher do not ſhew it to the people, & teach thē how to auoide the ſame, their bloud ſhal be required at his hand. But let vs come backe againe to the former matter, to ſee how well you vnderſtand your ten commandements. I would know this of you, whether it be good for mē to know the law, ſeeing it doth nothing but curſe & condem vs: if there were no law, there could be no ſin. I ſpeake both of the law of nature, and of the Law written; and if there were no ſin, there could be no condemnatiō: for this cauſe the Law is called the miniſterie of death and condemnation, and it is called the letter which killeth 2. Corinth. 3. Seeing it doth worke all this, what profite can it bring for to know it, or why ſhould it be preached?

Ath. I pray you tell me, you, for I am vnlearned, and you are learned. If it be as you ſay, I thinke it were good not to preach it: if it do condemne vs.

Zelot. What a ſhame is it, that a man of your age ſhould haue ſo litle skill, as not to

know to what purpose the Law serueth? It is a token you vnderstand your ten commandements well. I will tell you, when a man knoweth the Law, it doth bring him to see that he is altogether corrupted with sinne, both in body and soule, that he is vnder Gods heauie indignation and curse, and that in himselfe there is no helpe at all; it casteth him into feare and terror of Gods indgements, & so enforceth him to seeke remedy in Christ, whom before he did not greatlie seeke after. For looke how a man which doth not thinke himselfe sicke nor in danger of sickenesse, careth not for a Physition: so he which doth not know his damnable estate by the law, careth not for Christ. This is the cause why Christ saith: The whole neede not the Physition, but the sicke: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Therefore to such as haue wounded consciences the Gospell is sweete, and comfortable: and Christ in the latter end of the eleuenth chapter of S. Mathew, calleth such vnto him, saying: Come vnto me all you which trauell and be heauie loden, and I wil refresh you. But such as haue no feeling of their sinnes, or which are blinde and hardened, you shall perceiue small ioy or delight in them for to heare the word preached: they

they had rather be at Beare-baiting.

Ath. You say well, I would I could remember your words.

Zelot. There be many which will seeme to be desirous for to learne, but a man shall see, they continue euen as careleſſe as before: but I will go on with this matter. The Scripture saith, that a sorrowfull spirit is a sacrifice to God: and that God doth not despise the humble and contrite heart: but men are afraid to be brought to the knowledge and feeling of their sins, for feare, as they say, lest they should be driuen into despaire: as though that were a safe protection for them for a time to be in a senseleſſe securitie: and as though they were in the better case, because they make no conscience of their sins: whereas indeed those which are pricked and wounded with their sins, are in the way to repentance, when the other are farre off.

Ath. I could like your words the better, but that you would haue men not to trust to their faith: is it not good to beleeue well?

Zelot. There is nothing good in men, vnleſſe they beleeue well: and we cannot trust too much vnto faith: but you do not vnderstand what faith is. Tell me this: doth faith beleeue according as God setteth downe, and speaketh in his word, or doth it beleeue

contrarie to that which God vttereth?

Ath. **It doth not beleeue contrarie to that which God vttereth.**

Zelot. Let vs see then: when God setteth downe and sheweth which are the works of the flesh, and threatneth damnation vnto all those which walke in them: when God setteth downe, that the despisers of his word shall be condemned: and yet men which are defiled with the filthinesse of the flesh, and walke after their corrupt lusts, do boldly brag, that they beleeue to be saued, and setting nought by Gods word, say they trust in God: is this faith? God affirmeth one thing, and yet they beleeue the contrarie: but see the blindnes of men now adaies, when they heare vaine and brutish men boast of their faith, you do well say they, to haue a good beleefe, when as indeed it is no more but a proud presumption, wherewith God is highly displeased because by it they would make him a lier. When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith in earth? If this be faith, he shall find great plenty of it euery where. For the idolater, the swearer, the drunkard, the proud, the adulterer, are as full of faith as they can be thrust. For euerie one of these doth bragge, that he hath as good a faith to God as he which is the most holy of all.

Ath. These may repent and be saued, or else God forbid.

Zelot. I do not speake what God is able to do in calling, as he doth call some such vnto repentance, but what they haue in them presently. But I will see a little further how great skill you haue in the Law of God, because you need so little preaching. What say you vnto the second commandement? Is it lawfull for a man to worship idols?

Ath. I thanke God, I do not worship any, for that is flatly forbidden.

Zelot. What say you for the making of any image or picture of God, do you thinke that is amisse?

Ath. For making it is no matter, so that a man haue no confidence in them.

Zelot. How do you then vnderstand the words of the commandement, which say, Thou shalt not make to thy selfe any grauen image? &c.

Ath. He meaneth that we should not make any grauen image to the intent to worship it.

Zelot. That is your own addition, for there is no such exception expressed, neither can the order of the comandement beare it; for he doth not say, Thou shall not make to the intent to worship, but, Thou shalt

neither, make nor worship.

Ath. If you take it so, then why are painters allowed to make any picture, how is it lawfull to haue the image of the Prince in coine?

Zelot. I will shew you your errour, you do not vnderstand that the Law was deuided into two Tables, and that in the first Table, which hath foure commandements, there is nothing commanded or forbidden, but that which respecteth immediatly the worship and honour of God, he medleth not with any ciuill or politike matter: he doth absolutely forbid to make, as I may terme it, any diuine image, any similitude to represent God, or to be like him: because as the Scripture sheweth, there can no likenesse or similitude be made of God: for he is a Spirit of glorie, infinite, incomprehensible, which dwelleth in light which none can come vnto: and therefore you may reade in the Epist. to the Romaines, how horrible a sin it was to set vp any image or likenesse of God: therefore the pictures of the Trinitie, and such like, are verie abhominable. But to let this passe, what say you for the worshipping of them? whether is it idolatrie or not, if a man meane to worship God by the image, and not the image it selfe?

Ath.

Ath. How can that be idolatrie, when a man doth worship none but God, he knoweth that the image cannot helpe him.

Zelot. Then your meaning is, that vnlesse a man doth either worship the verie image it selfe, or else some false god in the image, that it is no idolatrie.

Ath. I see no reason to the contrarie: and I thanke God I neuer was so foolish as to take a blocke or a stone to be God.

Zelot. Then you thinke your selfe cleare in this commandement: you were neuer any idolater, you neuer kneeled or prayed vnto any idoll.

Ath. I haue kneeled before them, and prayed before them, but I neuer take thē to be God, neither did I pray vnto any, saue vnto the Lord God. I trust God will neuer charge me to be an idolater.

Zelot. All you atheists, which haue no knowledge of God, are crammed as full of Popish drosse as you can hold, saying that you will not abide by it, but go with the lawes of Princes, afraid to lose the world, because you haue made the world your God

Ath. I defie Poperie as much as the best of you all.

Zelot. Euen as much as you defie the diuell, whom you serue daily. For you vse Po-

piſh reaſons to excuſe your falling from God by idolatrie, and whereby a man may eaſily ſee that you are ready vnto it againe if time ſerued.

Ath. I ſée I muſt let you alone to iudge what you luſt.

Zelot. Nay, you vſe the verie Popiſh reaſons: whereby they would proue when we charge them with the breach of this commandement, that they do not commit idolatrie: for ſay they, When the Scripture doth condemne that ſinne, it is meant of ſuch as worſhip fained gods, as the heathen men did, or ſuch as do worſhip the image it ſelfe, and take it for to be God. But I will deale with you by Gods word. What do you ſuppoſe of the children of Iſraell, when they came to Aaron, to haue him make thē gods to go before them, when Moſes tarried ſo long in the mount: did they commit this great ſin of idolatrie?

Ath. They did commit idolatrie, and the broke faith, They were deſtroyed a great number of them.

Zelot. What, was their intent to worſhip any beſides the true God?

Ath. That it was, for they deſired Aaron to make them gods.

Zelot. What, thinke you they tooke Aarō

to

to be, a man or a god?

Ath. That is a question indeed: how could they thinke him to be a God?

Zelot. Did they thinke that Aaron being but a man, had power to make a god?

Ath. If they thought so, they were but fooles.

Zelot. And if you thinke they thought so, you shall proue no great wise mā. For which way can a man perswade any, that a man can make a god? or could they become more brutish then a calfe, to beleeeue that the earrings of gold, turned into the similitude of a calfe, were now become God? No my friend, it is very plaine, that they meant no more but an image of God, and that which should represent God, and put them in mind of him: you must not thinke they were so foolish, although they were verie foolish, as the holy Ghost in one Psal. chargeth them, that they turned their glorie into the similitude of a calfe which eateth hay. This then is plaine enough, that they meant not to worship the golden calfe it selfe, but God in the calfe. Let vs see then: did they meane to worship any other by the calfe, besides the true God?

Ath. It seemeth they did, or else why should they say, Gods: for there is but one God.

Zelot. Now you are light vpon a very poore shift: for we may as well say, This is thy God, ô Israel, or make vs a god to go before vs. For the Scripture it selfe, in the Hebrew tongue, although that it teach that there is but one God, yet speaketh of him in the plurall number, and saith, Gods, for excellencie or dignities sake, as we see Princes here in the world, when any of them speaketh, he doth not say, I. but we, not my person, but our person. For the phrase of the Scripture I might alledge diuerse places, but you can not vnderstand, but in your owne tongue: neuertheless I will cite one, it is in the Psal. *Elohim Shophetim Hu*, God is the Iudge, but the words are, Gods, he is Iudge.

Ath. **Can you proue that they meant to worship none but the true God?**

Zelot. It is easie to be proued, both by the words of the people themselues, when they say, These be thy Gods, ô Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Ægypt; they meant not to change their God, which brought them out from Pharao, and led the through the red sea: neither did they thinke that the calf which Aaron had made, was he which deuided the sea, and drowned Pharao with his host, but they tooke it for an image of

of that God, and not of any fained God: and also by the words of Aaron, when he saith, To morrow shall be a feast to Iehouah; which name was neuer giuen to any, but to the God of heauē, at the least in those daies, the God of Israel had that name peculiar vnto himselfe. Then you may see, they worshipped not the idoll it selfe, but God in the idoll: they meant not to worship any false God, but the God of heauen, which had deliuered them, and yet they did commit foule idolatrie, and fell from God, insomuch that God was exceeding wrath with them. Likewise in Poperie you fell from God, when you bowed vnto images.

Ath. **I hope not, because I did not as they did; they put a deuotion in it, I meant no such thing, but to be obedient to a law.**

Zelot. Then your meaning is, that you kept your heart and conscience to God, and went with your body but for fashion.

Ath. **So long as I did keepe my conscience and heart to God, I trust I did well enough.**

Zelot. Then you thinke God requireth not to be worshipped but with your soule, and that you may serue the diuell with your body. You thinke also that God doth not require the outward cōfession of the mouth,

although it should be with losse of life.

Ath. **You do not heare me say, that we may worship the diuell with our bodies.**

Zelot. You might heare your selfe say so, but that you say you know not what: for herein you are ignorant, that the worship of images is the worship of diuels. But I know there be many trim wise heads, which excuse the matter, and cleare themselues this way, that they make no deuotion of the image, or any other thing in the seruice of the Pope, their conscience is free to God, they serue and feare him, what doth it hurt them, although they come outwardly with their body vnto the other? what should they indanger themselues in so small a matter? But will you heare me what I can say out of Gods word against you, and such fellowes?

Ath. **I will heare you gladly, I am not so wilfull as not to heare.**

Zelot. There were amongst the Corinthians diuerse Christians, which were perswaded that it was a matter indifferent to go to the idoll temple, and there to sit at the feast with the infidels, which they made in honor of the idoll, and to eate of the meate which had bene slaine in sacrifice vnto the idoll. They excused the fact in this wise, that they had knowledge: they vnderstood well, that

the

the idoll was not God, they went not of any deuotion at all, as touching the worship and seruice which the heathen men did vse, but for frendship and neighbourhood sake, they would not refuse to eate with such as were their kinsfolkes or acquaintance. Now although Saint Paule doth mildly deale with them, & answereth their resons in the 8. and 9. chap. yet in the 10. chap. he dealeth very roughly with them, setting before them the terrible example of Gods wrath vpon idolaters, and sheweth plainly, that they were partakers of the table of diuels, and that they drank of the cup of diuels, howsoeuer they thought they kept themselues and their consciences free and vnpolluted. Euen so I conclude, that these worldlings which vse this shift, how little deuotion soeuer they haue, yet they haue no lesse then the Corinthians had in the idoll feast; therfore when S. Paule affirmeth that they committed idolatrie, it must needs follow, that these do much more.

Ath. Well, if the matter be heard, that it be an offence, I trust God will forgiue vs.

Zelot. It is your maner, although a sinne be neuer so foule, yet to make small account of it, but like a dogge that is wounded, ye thinke ye can by this meanes licke your

ſelues whole, if ye can but ſay, I hope God will forgiue vs.

Ash. If you ſay true, then all our fore-fathers ſhould be condemned, becauſe they did worſhip images. I doubt not but God was as merciſull vnto them, as hee is vnto men now: I thinke they pleaſed God better then we do now: let vs not ſtand ſo much in our owne light.

Zelot. It is a maruellous thing for to ſee how the diuell doth dazle mens eyes, and how he doth bewitch them. Theſe things which you vtter, and ſuch like, are euen like a vaile before your eyes, ſo that ye are not able for to haue any ſight into Gods word. How groſſe and doltiſh ſo euer the matter bee, if yee can ſay thus, our forefathers did it, will ye condemne them? then all is ſafe enough. But ſee how yee are ouerſeene, al our forefathers did not fal frō God by idolatrie, for euen in the pride of the reigne of Antichriſt, there were ſome ſtood vp againſt him, in diuerſe countries. There were alwayes ſome, whom God lightned to ſee the abhominations of the man of ſinne, and ſo to repent and take hold of Chriſt, and God who is alwaies like himſelfe receiued thē to mercie. And doubtleſſe God is more now diſpleaſed with ſuch as do now wilfully kicke

and

and ſpurne againſt the truth, and ſeeke for to quench the glorious light of the Goſpell, then hee was with them, from whom the word of God was taken away, and being blind, they were made for to beleeue euerie lie, and therefore now when God offereth his grace, and ſeeketh by his word to expell that groſſe darkeneſſe, it were good for ſuch as you, not to ſtand in your owne light, and obſtinately to refuſe the knowledge of God. Our forefathers had that great plague came vpon them which Saint Paule did foretell. 2. Theſ. 2. Namely, that there ſhould be a falling away, that Antichriſt ſhould deceiue the world, and bring them to damnation: for God (hee ſaith) ſhould ſend them ſtrong deluſions, euen for to beleeue lies, becauſe they receiued not the loue of the truth, that they might bee ſaued: and now when God offereth his word againe, men doe not ioyfullie and thankfully embrace it, and therefore God doth ſend them ſhepheards euen after their hearts deſire: not to feede them (for they cannot) but to fleece them for that they can skill off: not to be ſalt for to ſeaſon them, but to be euen like doung caſt vppon them for to corrupt them: not to giue them light, ſeeing themſelues are blind. The greateſt number of you are as farre from God, as they

were euen in the blindest time of Poperie, and that is confessed by your owne mouth, when yee say, yee would follow our forefathers: For yee meane not those forefathers which did know and worship God aright, but those which were seduced, and fell from him by Idolatrie. I am verie loth for to question with you any further in the commandements, ye are so exceeding blind in them. For I know that in our land, let al the people be numbred, and fiue parts of yee do vnderstand so much in the commandements, Lords prayer, and articles of the faith, that it were a great shame for a godly man to haue a child of ten yeares olde for to know no more.

Ath. **How can ye tel that I; thinke ye go beyond your booke, haue ye posed all?**

Zelot. I go not so farre beyond my booke, as you thinke I doe. And although I haue not posed all, yet I haue posed so many, that I know what the state of the most is. This I find that in the best and most religious townes generally, the greatest part haue very little zeale. This I find, that where there is one of these townes which are forward, there be fiue which are not, because they want teaching. This further I know by experience, that those which are the willing

ones, and as it were the daily hearers for a long time, are verie raw when they be examined. Then iudge you what is in the roft, which are verie seldome taught, one refuse for to be taught: and if this be not true, let me loose my hand. And yet there be idle bellies, which are not ashamed with open mouth to crie, that lesse preaching would serue, and that there is knowledge enough among the people, when the poore people doe not vnderstand so much as the Lords prayer: vnlesse they would hold them still in Poperie, they can be no more ignorant.

Ath. I could like the better, if the preaching might be only vpon the sabboth day: but now they run in the weeke dayes, and leaue their businesse, and begger themselues, they go to other townes alse, which is a pitie that it is suffered: it is a great disorder.

Zelot. He is said to be blessed, which hath his delight in the law of the Lord, and which doth meditate therein day and night: I confesse that the Sabboth day is the chiefe time to seeke for knowledge: but that man which hath so little loue to the Lord, that he cannot bestow one houre in a weeke for to heare it, and yet can bestow diuerse howers in vaine talking, drinking, and gaming, is but

a dul ſcholler vpon the Sabboth day: I warrant ye, if a man looke well vnto him, he ſhal find it hard to iudge whether he or the ſeat he ſate on, caried away moſt: and for leauing their buſineſſe ſo far as they may conueniently, would ye haue them forget the precept of our Sauiour Chriſt; firſt ſeeke the kingdome of God, and his righteouſneſſe, and then all theſe things ſhall be caſt vpon you. The ſoule with you is leſſe to bee cared for, then the body; ye prefer this life before eternall life: and as for this, that men come for to be beggers by following ſermons, that they ſell their kine, and that they are faine to be gathered for in the Church, yee haue a bouget full of theſe lies, and yee neede but euen a mil for to grinde them. They are taught by the word preached, to follow their labours painfully, and the bleſſing of God is vpon mens labours, which do ſeeke him and the knowledge of his word: and although it ſometime doth hinder them one howre, yet it ſaueth them and gaineth them many howers, which they were wont to beſtow vainely.

Ath. **I do not like this ſo euill as the other, when they runne from towne to towne ſo diſorderly.**

Zelot. I pray yee tell me, if there were a dearth

dearth of corne, how far would we goe to fetch corne, rather then ſtarue? I beleeue, as farre as the ſons of Iacob, when they went out of the land of Chanaan into Egypt.

Ath. **I count him a fole, which will not go a great way off to buy his corne, rather then ſtarue.**

Zelot. He is a ſtarke foole, which will not go a great way rather then ſtarue his body: but he is a foole which will not once ſtep out at his dore for to ſeeke the euerlaſting food of his ſoule.

Ath. **Thoſe are not alike, we muſt néeds ſéeke for to liue.**

Zelot. No, you cannot ſee them for to be alike: you ſee well in things of this world, but for heauenly things yee ſee nothing: but to come to the matter, it is great pity indeed that there ſhould bee ſuch diſorder, as that men ſhould run from towne to towne to heare ſermons. Our Sauiour Chriſt pitied them, when they came into the wilderneſſe for to heare him, becauſe he ſaith, they were as ſheepe without a ſhepheard: but you and your mates are not grieued with the ſame pity: yee are as like a malicious dogge as can be, which lyeth vpon the hay, and will eate none, neither will ſuffer the Oxe which would. Woe bee vnto ye Scribes and Pha-

rifies, ye Hypocrites, ye shut vp the kingdome of heauen before men, ye enter not in your selues, neither do ye suffer those which would enter. Mat. 23. 14.

Ath. You say they go to seeke foode for their soules, and to learne for to liue to God, but they do it of vaine glory.

Zelot. There be alwayes some no doubt, which do not seeke of a sincere mind but of vaine glory, and do abuse their knowledge, and are vainely puffed vp in themselues, with an opinion of those things which are not in them: but will you giue sentence against all, because some are such? Is this a good argument? men giue almes for vaine glory, men come to the Church, and pray of vaine glory: Therefore almes and prayer are to be left: for doubtlesse some do those things for vaine glory, euen as our Sauiour Christ accuseth the Scribes and Pharisies.

Ath. But Christ bideth vs doe those things. How will ye proue that we are commanded to do this?

Zelot. I know no place which hath in plaine words, Goe vnto other countries or townes for to heare preaching: and why? because the will of God is, that they should haue preachers come home vnto them, and be appointed ouer them for to feede them.

I might alleadge examples of good men which sought after Christ, whom he did not forbid. Doe yee thinke when the Lord commandeth vs to seeke him so earnestly, and that in the misterie of his Gospell, that a few miles ought for to stop vs? How farre thinke ye doe men runne for a little earthly substance? How farre doe they runne on heapes, both men and women, vnto feasts, may-games, dauncings, playes, bearebaitings, and other such vanities?

Ath. **Youth will be doing, ye must not blame them, they haue time enough to bee holy hereafter, I haue had as great delight my selfe ere now in those things as one, but now I ware old.**

Zelot. I was sure yee would allow this kind of running from towne to towne, this is no disorder at all: how many are there of ye, which crie out with open mouth, against such as seeke after the word, and seeke for to trouble and punish them for so doing, which once open your mouth against these foule abuses? Whereas ye say, youth will be doing, ye say true, and so will may aged likewise, but doth it follow therefore that they must bee suffered to doe the things which are euill? In that ye say, they haue time enough to be holy hereafter, therein yee shew

your

your selfe to be a right worldling, a very Epicure, an ignorant man: for thus your wordly Epicures doe speake, youth will haue their race, let them alone, what should young men and maydes doe with the Scriptures? cleane contrary vnto that which God speaketh by his Prophet: Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? euen by taking heed thereto according to thy word. Likewise by Salomon in the booke of Ecclesiastes chapter 11: Remember thy creator in the daies of thy youth. But now a dayes it is a principall point of Diuinity, that youth may walke after the lustes of the flesh so long, vntill through custome of sinning, they are so besotted and hardened in their wicked lustes, and their concupiscences are growne so strong, that there can no grace enter into them; and so it seemed for to be with you, for I dare warrant, you are able to tell a long tale of your youth trickes.

Arb. **Well, I am as I am, you cannot make me better, and I trust ye shall make me no worse. Ye speake as though none could be good but Scripture men.**

Zel. None can be good but such as feare God, such as seeke for to obey him: None feare God, which set light by his ordinances, and cast them behind their backes:

None

None can obey God, but such as doe seeke for to know and follow those precepts which he vttereth in his word. None are godly, but such as are cleansed, and guide their wayes by the word. He which is of God heareth Gods word.

Ath. If they be so good and godly, how commeth it to passe then, that there is so much debate among them? for I know to owne my selfe, which are euen deuided one part against another, since they had a preacher, which were not so before. This they gaine, that whereas before they loued together, now there is dissention sowne among them.

Zelot. Now ye discharge your greatest ordinance: I trow ye haue now paid it home: It is hard if Satan cannot with this engine ouerthrow and beate downe preaching. But I pray you tell me, can ye put fire and water together but they will rumble? Will ye haue light and darkenesse for to agree as companions together?

Ath. What is this to the matter?

Zelot. Would ye haue God and the diuel agree together? would ye haue the godly and the wicked for to bee at one? this yee must do, ye must looke where the fault is to be laid.

Ath.

Neb. I thinke the fault muſt needs bee layd vpon the preaching, becauſe they agreed before that came.

Zelot. If their agreement together before had bene good, then no doubt the preaching that ſhould breake it, could not bee good: for one good thing cannot deſtroy another. But the former peace was not in God, but in the fleſh: neither was it ſo great as you would ſeeme for to ſet it forth, becauſe that the worldlings are alwaies at ſtrife, and one readie for to cut anothers throate: but yet their hatred is ſo exceeding great againſt the Goſpell, that in reſpect of the minde which they carrie towards the profeſſors thereof, they ſeeme among themſelues to bee at peace, and one to loue and make much of another.

Neb. Where is the fault then for to bee laid?

Zelot. Vpon the wicked, which fret and rage againſt the word, becauſe it laieth open and diſcloſeth their filthineſſe, and bewrayeth them: for the light (as S. Paul ſaith) doth manifeſt al things. They pretend other excuſes, as though they hated the profeſſors for ſome euil conditions: but this is very euident, a blind man may almoſt diſcerne it, that ſo long as a man is void of religion and

maketh

maketh profession of no more then they, so long, although he be full, and swarme with great vices, he is an honest man: but let him follow the word, and bee carefull for to amend, then there is not a lewder fellow vpon earth, diuerse slaunders shall be raised, things shall bee reckoned vp which hee did seauen yeares agone: and now they hate him like a dogge: Light is come into the world, and men loue darkenesse more then light, because their workes be euill. Will ye charge Christ and his Gospell, because as he saith, he came not to send peace, but a sword, to set the father against the sonne? Mat 10. Or will ye lay the blame vpon those which loue the light? Will ye blame Saint Paule and his preaching, because there was stir and hurley burley almost wheresoeuer he came? Was hee to bee blamed, or the wicked infidels, which could not abide to haue their sinnes reproued?

Ath. **There be some places where they haue graue and learned preachers, and yet there is no such contention in their parishes: I like that well.**

Zelot. You like that well: so doth your maister also.

Ath. **What meane you by that? whom do ye call my maister?**

Zelot.

Zelet. Euen the diuell, for he is content those preachers should ride vpon his backe, because hee is sure they will not spurgall him: they be verie gentle riders. Doe ye not thinke that if they should set foorth Gods word as they ought, and spread the light, that all wicked men (of which their parish are full) would storme and fret against them? the diuell himselfe would fiske about, if they should spurre him but a little. But they can tell a smooth tale in the pulpit, garnished with some merrie storie, for to make the people merry, or else some old rotten allegorie, or some farre fetched matter out of some great writers, that the people may be at their wits ende, and admire them. A man would thinke to see the people come out of the Church blowing, that they were fed as full as tickes, when they go home with emptie bellies. This I dare warrant, if it be not so, let me loose both mine eares, that, Goe thorough the parishes of these graue and learned diuines, and except such as runne to fetch their victuals other where, ye shall not finde fiue among fiuescore which are able to vnderstand the necessarie grounds and principles of religion: and yet the people will say they be excellent deepe men: But I loue not those wels which are so deepe that a

man

man can draw no water out of them.

Ath. I see you like better of young rash heads, and troublesome fellowes, then yee doe of graue staied men: for now a dayes there are a number which take vpon them to preach, which indeed do but prattle: and for my part, I will beleeue none of them: but I will rather giue credit to that which ancient learned men do speake.

Zelot. I do vtterly mislike, that any rash head should haue the office of preaching, which is a thing of so great dignitie, as to be the mouth of God vnto the people, to vtter the counsels and misteries of the Lord, and to teach them the way to saluation: and great dishonour to God and his Gospell it is, if there be manie such as you say there be: but if they be godly, learned, graue, discreet, and wise, and doe faithfully and zealously dispose the manifold misteries of God, then the matter is not whether they bee yong or old: for the doctrine which they doe teach and expound, is not their owne, but the doctrine of Christ, the authoritie is not of them, but of God which hath giuen it. But I know your meaning: you count all those to be ignorant, and to prattle, which doe not preach according to your humour, such as do sharply inueigh against your vanities: and those

which

which doe not, they bee learned and grau
men, let vs beleeue them: and so ye look
not what God saith, but what men say: an
surely those kind of graue men doe great
hurt: I meane such as carry a great shew
of learning in them, and scarce any are th
better for it.

Ath. And surely I thinke they do much
good.

Zelot. You thinke they doe much good
but I know they doe very much hurt: th
blind and vnlearned Ministers are hurtfull
those which are Popish priests do hurt, the
which follow euill vices, as drunken Min
sters, swearers, quarrellers, adulterers, gam
sters and such like, doe hurt, but yet thei
which you speake of, doe more hurt: I will
tell you how, where there is such an one a
those aboue named, the people haue no
great opinion of them, for they can easily
say, alas our Minister is not able nor meet for
to teach vs, and so they are willing to heare
and to bee informed by others: but those
which haue one of your profound Clarkes,
the people so much hang vpon him, that
they will heare none other: This they say, our
preacher is as profound a man as anie of
them al: if we were out of the way, he would
tell vs: if so much teaching were needfull,

would

would not he teach vs? if such things were euill, would he vse them? and so they conclude, that they care not for learning ought sauing at his mouth, when as indeed hee teacheth them little or nothing, peraduenture he giueth them a cold collation once a moneth, and when a man shall take the proofe of them, he shall finde that they are no better then such as haue a dumbe idol to their shepheard.

Ath. **Is it not better to haue a sermon now and then, and to haue it a learned sermon: then for to haue many without learning? I thinke one such sermon doth more good then an hundred of those flying sermons.**

Zelot. I graunt thus much, that the word of God is to be handled with great care, men are not to step forth and to speake rashly, and without sure & vndoubted knowledge of the things which they vtter. Moreouer, there ought to be such learning and discretion, as shall be sufficient to open and to manifest the power and dignitie of the word vnto the consciences of the hearers: he must be able for to make plaine the sense of the scriptures, and he must apply it to the hearers, which doth preach: for to handle the holy misteries of God vnskilfully, is a vice

greatly to be condemned, and I thinke such although they preach neuer so often, shall do but little good. But I pray you let mee know which you count a learned sermon: and which ye call a flying sermon?

Ath. **That is a learned sermon, when the Preacher doth lay open the matter learnedly.**

Zelot. You meane when he is able to speake much Latine, and to alleadge all sorte of writers.

Ath. **I count those learned fellowes indeed, I will not giue a button for these English Doctors, which can alleadge no more but out of Paul and Peter.**

Zel. It would be a notable learned sermon thē, if the Preacher should speake all Latine.

Ath. **Then we which do not vnderstand Latine should be neuer the better.**

Zelot. If so little could pleasure you, then no doubt a whole sermon would edifie yee much: but such vaine men as you, doe shew your vanitie, when yee looke more after those things which should feede your eares, then for to haue your soules conuerted. Is that to bee vsed which cannot edifie at all, but serueth for a vaine shew, and disturbeth the mind and memorie of the diligent hearer? But let this goe, and let vs see the o-

ther,

ther, for alleadging of writers: in this matter yee haue sundry graue men on your side, which count those sermons learned, which are set foorth with all sorts of authorities, and those which bring the bare word out of the Bible, they make but verball Sermons: But doubtlesse they may shew some grauity in their beard, for there is none in ỹ matter.

Ath. **Are they not thereby knowne for to be learned men: euery plow-man now a dayes can alleage out of Saint Paul.**

Zelor. They are thereby knowne for to be vnskilfull men, and such as are not rightly instructed in the doctrine of S. Paul. They make a great shew of learning and yet want the knowledge of the dignitie of Gods word: when as they bring in the sayings of Plato, and Aristotle, as fellowes and companions with the oracles of God, vttered by his Prophets and Apostles; and as though there were greater and deeper matter in those, then in the Bible, whereas all the heauenly misteries and counsels of God are vttered, they sticke not to count that vnlearned which is brought from thence: and great learning to bee in the sayings of the other. For this cause they doe also seeke for to garnish their sermons, and as it were for to set them with pearle, when as in effect they

doe nothing else, but as if a man should mingle leade with pure gold, and clay with precious oyle. And because yee speake of learning, tell me what ye thinke, whether Saint Augustine or Saint Paule, was the better learned.

Ath. **You should aske that question of such as are learned: would you haue me tell ye?**

Zelot. Is not he which doth alleage sentences out of Augustine, Ambrose, Hierome and Cyprian, better learned then they which alleage out of Moses, Esay, Peter, Paule or Iohn?

Ath. **I told you before, that euery man can alleage out of these, and if I could read and had a Bible, I could do it also: but to alleage out of the other, none can doe that but such as are great Clearks.**

Zelot. Then it seemeth, that they were better then Paul, and Peter, or Moses, or else why should they be esteemed to bee better learned which do cite them?

Ath. **If I might shoote my bolt, I thinke they were the learnedest, because their writtings are so profound.**

Zelot. I would you did thinke so alone, but indeed the people haue beene so deluded with such as would make a shew of learning

ning, that multitudes are of your minde, which bringeth in a vile and shamefull abasing of the most holy and sacred Bible. But let me aske ye certaine questions. Doe ye not thinke that if the writings of those men were to be read in our tongue, that euerie man then could bee able to alleage out of them, as they do out of the Bible?

Ath. I thinke they might then be able.

Zelot. Doe yee suppose those should by and by be esteemed for to be learned, which doe alleage sayings out of them?

Ath. I se no cause why then, they should not be counted so.

Zelot. Is he learned in the Bible, which can alleage manie sentences?

Ath. A man may speake much and know little.

Zelot. You might see likewise, that men may alleage sayings out of great Doctors, & yet themselues be great Dawes: for he is learned, whom God doth teach for to vnderstand the heauenly misteries vttered by the Prophets and Apostles: and in vttering them doth follow the steps of Paule and the rest. The Doctors had all their true learning out of the Bible: for in it is set forth that wisedome which is aboue all.

Ath. The scriptures are darke and

hard, and therefore men now doe not vnderstand them as the Doctors did. And for this cause, I haue heard preachers say, they are to be touched.

Zelot. Those Preachers might haue bene wiser, then for to maintaine two so grosse opinions: the first, accusing the Scriptures of such darkenesse as though they could not be vnderstood, whereas indeed in the principall and most necessarie pointes, the Lord hath spoken so clearely, that verie simple men may be taught for to see the plaine euidence of the word. The other depriueth the Church of the true interpreter of the word, which is the Spirit of God, as though the Lord did not now giue such gifts, as he gaue to those Doctors: which is a Popish opinion also: for so long as God giueth his word to the Church, so long he giueth the interpreter of the same, although not in all ages alike: but whosoeuer is not blind, may easily see, that in this age there be as great giftes bestowed vpon the Church, as euer were in any since the time of the Apostles.

Ath. Then you are one of those which defece the old Fathers, when yee will not allow them for to be cited in sermons. To what vse then should men reade them?

Zelot. That is a verie false accusation:

should

ſhould a man be accuſed for defacing the honor of the Lord Chancellour, becauſe he would deny him the dignitie and honour of the Prince? Likewiſe ſhall a man bee ſaid for to iniurie or deface the Doctors, becauſe he will not giue them the dignitie which doth belong vnto God alone? The Preacher is the mouth of God vnto the people, and not the mouth of men: he is not for to vtter doubtfull matter and vncertaine, but ſuch as may be moſt euident. He muſt ſay and proue euen vnto the conſcience of the hearer, thus God ſpeaketh, and thus he meaneth. He cannot ſay, Auguſtine ſaith it, therefore God ſaith it; Auguſtine ſaith it therefore it is vndoubtedly true: for Auguſtine might and did erre many waies. But he may ſay, Saint Paule ſaith it, therefore God himſelfe ſaith it, Saint Paule ſaith it, therefore it is vndoubtedly true: for looke what he ſaith, or any other Apoſtle, Euangeliſt or Prophet, God hath ſet it downe by them, it is his, and not theirs: they are but the inſtruments which he vſed for to vtter and penne his will, his Spirit in them ruled the whole in this caſe, ſo that they did not nor could not erre: now when the Preacher doth lay open their ſaying, not he, nor they, but God ſpeaketh: as they were the mouth of God for to

set it downe, so is he now againe the mouth of God, for to recite and declare it.

Ash. The word of God is certaine and sure, because God cannot lie, but how shall I know which is the true sense of it? shall I beleeue euery man which doth interpret the word that I not the better beleeue him, if he say it is not my interpretation, but S. Ierome he saith so, & Augustine he saith so, I promise ye, he shall haue the greater credit with me, for they were other maner of men then he.

Zelot. I cannot but marueil to see how grosse and dull your head is for to learne the truth, and how readily you can bring out such matters as this: ye speake not of your owne head: I would there were no greater learned men then you blinded in this matter. But let me shew you your grosse error. Ye say the word is certaine and sure, but the interpretation thereof you make doubtfull: but what are wee the better that the word of God is sure and certaine, vnlesse it bee sure and certaine vnto vs, which can not bee, except the interpretation be so? It is as good for you to say, the word is doubtfull, as for to say the sense is doubtfull. Now when as ye hang the sense vpon men, can ye denie but that it is still in

doubt

doubt? This must still arise in the mind, Those Doctors said so, but they might erre, & therefore I am not certaine that this is the sense. If this shal be admitted in the Church, what shall become of that πληροφορία, or full certaintie of faith, which the word of God doth require to be in vs? it is grounded vpon the word of God, for it cannot stand otherwise. Moreouer, faith is sure what God meaneth, or else it is no faith: therefore such as would hang mens faith vpon the authoritie of men, where they must needes still bee in doubt, and when they are at the furthest, they come but vnto this, it is verie like for to bee true, because such notable mē speak it, do not know a right what faith is. For that ye say, he shal haue the more credit with you, if he say, It is not my saying, but the saying of Augustine: therein ye were euen as good say, that your faith is built vpon men, and not vpon God: For if you do beleeue, because some great learned or godly man telleth you the matter, this is no true beliefe, for we must be fully perswaded that God himselfe doth tell vs, or else we be neuer the nearer.

Ath. How shall I know when God speaketh or which God speaketh? you come and preach one way, another commeth and he doth preach another way, yée preach one

contrarie

contrarie to another: you say God speaketh, he saith God speaketh, which shall we beleeue? Is not he to be best beleeued, which can shew that those great Doctors are on his side?

Zelot. See what a ground you leane vnto: you know not when God speaketh, nor what God speaketh: and therefore yee will haue some of the old Doctors for to tell: are you sure he telleth you right? if ye be it is because he sheweth you the word of God, why he telleth ye so; the credite must be giuen vnto the word, and not to the man. But you say ye cannot tell when one doth alleage the word in the true meaning; how then can ye tell when one alleageth the Doctor in the true meaning? He which will falsifie the word of God in the Bible, he will not sticke for to falsifie the meaning of the Doctor: you may search the Scriptures, to see whether the testimonies alleaged be so: as the men of Berea did, when Paule preached, Act. 17. 11. you cannot, neither are you commanded for to search the Doctors: and vnlesse ye see the manifest authoritie of Gods word, yee are not bound for to beleeue, but if it bee plainly shewed, that God hath spoken, then ye are bound vnder the paine of damnation, for to giue credite vnto it. Christ saith, my sheepe

heare

heare my voice, a ſtranger they will not heare, Iohn 10. Alſo Saint Iohn ſaith, Brethren, beleeue not euerie ſpirit, but trie the ſpirits, whether they be of God, 1. Ioh. chap. 4. Hee therefore which ſaith, I cannot tell when the voyce of Chriſt is vttered, it is all one as if he ſhould ſay, I am none of the ſheepe of Chriſt, becauſe (as he ſaith) Euery one of his ſheepe do know his voice. He that ſaith, I know not which Preacher doth preach truth, and which falſhood, hee may euen as wel ſay, I am none of thoſe, to whom the holy Ghoſt ſpeaketh, and ſaith: Trie the ſpirits, whether they be of God; it is a generall precept giuen vnto all Chriſtians.

Ath. Ye ſhall neuer make me beleeue that euerie man is for to iudge whether the Preacher ſpeake true or falſe.

Zelot. I know not what I ſhall be able for, to make you beleeue, but I am ſure I can plainly ſhew what ye ought to beleeue. Firſt, marke this, the word came not from man, neither can a man teach it ye, vnleſſe God reueale it by his Spirit: if it were the wiſedome of the world, or of the fleſh, then the ſpirit of the world, which is in man, and knoweth the ſecrets of man, could teach it; but becauſe it is the myſterie of God, none can make ye learne it, but the holy Ghoſt, which

which searcheth euen the deepe things of God, as Saint Paul teacheth. 1. Cor. 2. 10. Saint Iohn in his first Epistle, Chapter 2. hauing told them that there were euen then manie Antichrists, he comforteth them with this: You (saith he) haue receiued an anointing from the holy one, and know al things. Like as therefore none of those can learne, whom God doth not enlighten with his Spirit: so on the contrarie part, all those which are taught within by the Spirit, do feele when the doctrine which the same Spirit hath taught, is vttered: he knoweth his owne, and he sealeth it vp in their hearts and consciences, which being instructed by him, must needes consent thereto fully. For this cause there is great difference betweene such as set all vpon the authorities of men, and such as preach, as S. Paule saith hee did, with the plaine euidence of the Spirit, and of power, 1. Cor. 2. 4. he addeth the reason in the next verse, that their faith should not consist in the wisedome of men, but in the power of God. If faith may not hang vpon the wisedome of men, and therefore the intising speech which mans wisedome teacheth, is to be auoided in setting forth the Gospell; then can it not stand vpon the authorities of men.

Ath. Is it not lawful in any respect for to alleage them?

Zelot. Yes, no doubt there are circumstances, which may make it sometime verie needfull: I speake only against this, that they are alleaged, when as wee may alleage the same things out of the word it selfe. And when they are alleaged, for men to build their faith vpon, or to make men thinke that there can be no certaintie in the interpretation of the word, but whereas they are made for to speake: when as indeed the preacher in his sermon must come with such euidence, and make his proofe so plaine and so strong, that it must needes conuince the conscience of the hearer, in such wise that of necessity he shall be forced for to say, Vndoubtedly that which this man vttereth, is that which God himselfe speaketh: for so saith the Apost. 1. Cor. 14. 24. If, saith he, al do prophecy, and there come in an infidell, or one vnlearned, hee is reproued of all, hee is iudged of all, and so the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and falling vpon his face he will worship God, confessing that God is verily among you. This testimony doth shew that the force of Gods word vttered nakedly is such, that it conuicteth the heart of the infidell, and compelleth him for to confesse

that

that God is with them which speake it. The word of God is described in the Epistle to the Hebrewes chapter 4.12. after this sort: the word of God (saith he) is liuely and mighty in operation, sharper then any two edged sword, and entreth in vnto the deuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, of the ioyntes and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts & intents of the heart. Men might vnderstand by this, that by whomsoeuer the sword of the spirit be drawne forth, if it bee rightly handled, it will pierce through and through, both the bodies and soules of the hearers, and will moue euery vaine in the hart, euen of the wicked: so that he needeth not to grind it or make it sharpe vpō the grindstone of Ambrose or Hierome.

Ath. **When you destroy learning, if ye take away the writings of the Doctors, for they serue to no vse: if it bee as you say, why should students reade them?**

Zelot. There is great benefit in the reading of them, for to helpe vs to the true vnderstanding of the Scriptures.

Ath. **If they helpe ye to vnderstand the scriptures, wherefore do ye not when ye expound the scriptures, tell which is theirs? Ye robbe them, and take the glory to your selues.**

Zelot.

Zelot. Now ye reason as buzzardlike as can be, ye may be a Doctor of Dunces for this argument: Doth the Preacher come in his owne name, must he tell his owne will, or is he to seeke his owne glory, or the glory of any other man? If other haue holpen him to find the knowledge of Gods will, which he must vtter, is it therefore become theirs, because they haue shewed it vnto him? If he now set it forth in the name of the Lord alone, whose it is, doth he rob them? For looke whatsoeuer a man findeth in the ancient writers in expounding, hee is no further to beleeue them then they proue their exposition out of the Bible: so that it continueth still not theirs, but the Lords: and if we should ascribe it vnto them, wee should rob the Lord, & be theeues for other men. Therfore in this matter, wee must follow the precept which the Lord giueth 1. Pet. 4. 11. He that speaketh, let him speake as the words of God.

Ath. **Is that so meant, that it is not allowed to cite any thing out of other bookes, bestdes the word?**

Zelot. I told yee before that it is not simply vnlawful for to cite or alleadge a sentéce out of a Doctor: but the manner and ende of the doing of it is all. I say likewise that a man

may

may in some sort alleadge a saying out of any Heathen or prophane writer: for we haue the example of Saint Paule, Actes. 17. 1. Corinth. 15. Titus. 1. alleadging the sayings of prophane Poets: but wee must see to what ende: doth he reason thus; The Poet saith it, therefore are yee to giue credite vnto it: no man would bee so foolish, as to make their words being Heathen men, to be of such authority: but he sheweth that euen their owne Doctors consented with him in those things, and therefore a shame, and foule reproch for them to be ignorant of the same. When the Papistes do charge vs to bee gone from the faith of the olde Fathers, although we are to confute them this way, namely, by shewing their treacherie and lying, when we are able to proue by the writings of the auncient Fathers, that in the chiefe points they fully agree with vs: yet this is not the way which God hath appointed and sanctified for the conuersion and education of his people: this engine is ouer weake to reare vp the Temple of the Lord: we must take heed we leaue not the mighty word it selfe, and leane vnto a tottering pillar. Saint Paule sheweth the power of the word. 2. Corinth. 10, where he saith, although we walke in the flesh, yet we warre not after the flesh: for the weapons

of

of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty in God for to throw downe holds: which hee expoundeth in the verse which followeth, to be the imaginations and euery high thing which is exalted against the knowledge of God, and euery thought, which (hee saith) they leade captiue vnto the obedience of Christ. There is no power nor any authority can doe these things, but that which is in the word of God it selfe: which is to be made so euident by the Preacher, that it may bring this thing to passe.

The miserable experience in our time of such as flie from the strong power of the word, and fight with the weapons of men, may teach vs, because it doth manifestly appeare vnto all which haue eyes to see, that they are not strong enough to throw downe holds, and to leade captiue vnto the obedience of Christ the rebellious thoughts and imaginations of mens minds: they cannot shew a man by them conuerted sincerely and throughly from errors and euill maners, by alleaging the authorities of men. It was not the practise of the ancient and godly fathers in their sermons, for to leaue the testimonies of the mighty word, which is able to rent the stony rocke in peeces, and to cleaue to the authorities of weake men, which were gone

before them. But what should a man say? The word is thought to be of no power, vnlesse it be strengthened otherwise.

But let vs leaue this and come backe againe to some of your other matters. I remember yee did lay this as a great accusation against the preachers, that they medled with predestination.

Ath. I did so, and not without cause, for they do great hurt thereby vnto many, when they teach such things.

Zelot. What hurt can ye shew, which commeth by preaching of predestination.

Ath. If a man be chosen for to be saued, let him do as euil as he can he shall not be damned: and if a man be appointed before he was borne to be damned, let him do neuer so much good, he can not be saued: and therefore when yee teach this doctrine, ye were euen as good tell the people that they may liue as they lust: Let them neuer heare teaching, to what purpose should it serue?

Zelot. How proude and presumptuously bold ignorance doth make a man; It might seeme to be a rare thing that a mortall man, which is but clay and dust, yea a rotten Carion, should aduance himselfe against God, euen the Lord of infinite wisedome and glory, but that we see it daily for to be common.

Ath. Do not accuse me for to be proud, I would I were as free from all other faults, if it pleased God.

Zelot. If ye were as sicke as ye be proud, a very little meate would giue yee your supper: But I know you do not see your pride.

Ath. I marueil why ye should count me proud, ye see how plaine I goe.

Zelot. You thinke that pride is in the coate, when it is in the hart, a man may haue a king's hart in his breast, and yet a beggers coate vpon his backe. There is cause why ye do not go gay, ye are not able: for, take the raggeddest begger in the world, and giue her the same wing which the great Ladies haue, and yee shal see her flie the same flight. There is pride against God, and against men, and you are in the deepest of them, euen against God.

Ath. Proue that, because ye condemne me so soze.

Zelot. Ye take your selfe for to be wise, and the Lord vndiscreete and vnwise. For ye charge him with folly, when as yee say this doctrine doth ouerthrow al, and yet he hath expressed it in sundry places of his word. If it be so exceeding hurtfull, then surely Christ was to be blamed, S. Paule, and S. Peter with the rest of the Apostles were very vndis-

creete, because they haue set it forth. It seemeth that it had bene good for them to haue taken aduise of the deepe heades of the world, which might haue foretold them the danger which would follow, and haue said, Maisters take heede how ye deale with such doctrine, it will turne yee vnto discredit. O foolish wise flesh, this matter is ouer-farre beyond thy reach, thou canst neuer come within the smell of it.

Lib. **Smell, or smell not, let me heare you answer the matter.**

Zelot. You suppose that your reasons are vnanswerable, and that causeth ye to be so fresh and readie, but alas man, your halfepenie is no good siluer, ye are in a wrong boxe, I will shew you how childishly ye erre. For soothsay you, if God hath chosen a man to saluation before he was borne, then let him doe as euill as he can, he shall not be damned: and whereas the nature of man is prone and ready to seeke after the libertie of the flesh, this doth open a doore vnto him, and a wide passage vnto all euill, because he needeth not to care what he doth, it is appointed beforehand what shall become of him.

This mightie and inuincible reason of yours hath neuer an eye to see with all, and although it seeme for to haue good legges,

yet is it but an old Criple: be not led by it, for ye shall both fall into the ditch. Did ye neuer heare what Saint Paule saith, Ephesians. chapter, 1. 4. these are his words, as he hath chosen vs in him before the foundations of the world were laid, that we should bee holy and without blame before him through loue. How stand these two things together, when ye say, if men be chosen they may liue as they lust, and God saith by his Apostle, that he hath chosen them for to be holy and blameless in their conuersation? And this is vndoubtedly true, that those whom God hath predestinate to be heires of glorie, he hath sealed them with the holy spirit, as ye may reade in the same chapter. They are freed from the bondage of sinne by the spirit, they walke in the spirit, they are led by the spirit, they shew foorth by the fruits of the spirit, that the flesh with the lusts and concupiscences thereof is crucified in them, and that they are regenerate and borne againe of the spirit, and so become new creatures in Christ, sinne is abhominable vnto them, they hate and loath it no lesse then deadly poyson, they pant and breath to be wholly set free from the remnants of it: righteousnesse is deare and precious vnto them, their ioy and harts delight is in it:

they ſigh and grone, becauſe they can not reach vnto the perfection of it. The word of God doth plainely teach, that the elect are thus, as I haue ſhewed: and yet men ſay that election taketh away all care of godly life.

Ath. **I like not this, that men will ſay, they know God hath choſen them: how can they tell? can anie man tell what God will doe with him? Did God euer tell them, that they are elected?**

Zelot. How ſhould you like of this, when as ye like of no goodneſſe? How ſhould you which are but a natural man, iudge of things ſpirituall? You thinke a man cannot tell what God will doe with him: becauſe you are blind and ſee not the way, yee ſuppoſe all other are ſo: you are an infidell, or elſe ye might plainely heare God ſpeake in his word, and tell which ſhall be ſaued, and which are in the way to damnation. Do yee ſuppoſe that it is vncertaine, when the ſcripture telleth a man how hee ſhall know that he is choſen: if the word of God tell him he is choſen, hath not God himſelfe then told him? Read the firſt chapter of the ſecond Epiſtle of Peter, and there ye ſhall ſee how a man ſhall know certainely that he is elected, and that he ſhall neuer fall. For if a

man

man feele that God teacheth him by his spirit, and reneweth him by repentance, he is sure (because God saith so) that he is chosen to eternall life: if at anie time he feele the grace of God weake in him, then doth hee doubt and stagger, but yet his faith getteth the vpper hand. On the other side, when a man liueth in sinne, and obeyeth vnrighteousnesse, God telleth him plainely that he is in the way to damnation. And therefore all those which doe not finde in themselues the spirituall birth at the least begun, whereby they may assure themselues that they bee chosen, may certainely say, that as yet their state is damnable.

Ath. **How can ye say their state is damnable, so long as they beleeue? Can men do more then beleeue?**

Zelot. They doe not beleeue: for if they beleeue, then are they sure that God loueth them, what is it else which they beleeue? if they know they be in fauour with God, it is because hee chose them in Christ: If they doubt of Gods fauour, then doe they doubt whether God heareth their prayers, and therefore they shall not receiue anie thing at the hands of God, as ye may learne in the Epistle of Saint Iames. Chapter. 1. verse. 6. 7. & although manie of the faithfull do doubt

and flagger oftentimes, yet they are not like the vnfaithfull which continue in the same, but they get the vpper hand, they striue by praier, and by all other meanes which God hath appointed, to strengthen and increase their faith, their knowledge, their repentance, and so farre to grow in grace, vntill they come to assurance that God hath chosen them. As for the wicked they know of no such faith, that a man may attaine to assurance of his election: they labour not about anie such matter, but continue still in their blind doubts, setting all vpon hazard: and as for their doing what they can, it is nothing, they cannot but sinne, and therefore be damned, howsoeuer they seeme for to doe good workes, yet before God they are no good workes, because they proceed not of faith, but from the flesh: they are not grafted into the true vine Christ and for that cause can bring forth no fruit, Iohn. 15.

Ath. If God had chosen men before the world to be saued, wherefore did Christ die for to saue them? If they should be saued before, his death was more then needed. Wherefore should men be taught, wherefore should they pray? all these are in vaine.

Zelot. You are like vnto a man which

doth

doth make ſtrife and debate betweene bre-thren and friends: you would ſet praier and teaching, and the death of Chriſt, together by the eares with Gods election: but doe what ye can, all theſe will agree together, they be ſo vnſeparably knit in friendſhip. God hath choſen men for to bee redeemed in his ſonne: for the ſcripture ſheweth that we are choſen in Chriſt. He hath choſen men to be inſtructed and called by preach-ing the word; hee hath choſen men for to call vpon him and to worſhip him, in holi-neſſe and righteouſneſſe all the dayes of their life.

Ath. **Ye ſpeake much of preaching, as though it were ſo needfull: Can they make the word of God better then it is? Is there not enough ſet downe in the Bible for men to reade, wherefore ſhould they adde more? Cannot men reade that? Is not reading preaching?**

Zelot. Now yee ſeeke new ſtarting holes. There is ſome Colt ſo wild, that he wil trou-ble halfe a doſen light men of foot for to driue him: he will in at euerie gap, turne at euerie lane, and out at euerie gate. Euen ſo I can like the reaſoning with ſuch as you are; ye haue ſo many by-ſhifts, ſo many cauils, ſo manie turnings, that ten of the beſt learned

in

in this land, shall heardly bee able to keepe yee in the way. But wee must not leaue yee thus, but bring yee into the way againe. Preaching is not so needfull, they can make the word of God no better thē it is: why man they do not preach for to make ỹ word better, but for to make you better: there is enough set down in the Bible, but you vnderstand little enough of it. Men may reade it, and a great number do which peruert it, and are nothing bettered by it, because they seek not help for to vnderstand it. Reading say you is preaching. Truely then I know a man which hath a little daughter that is a trim Preacher. I perceiue our land is ful of preachers: but yet in deed not such as S. Paule describeth. For the little gerle is not apt to teach, able to instruct, to exhort, to conuince, nor to diuide or cut the word of God aright, nor to open the misteries of it. If ye leape ouer many of these ditches, ye will breake your neck in the end: ye are a very skilfull man, when ye take expounding and applying the word of God, for to be adding: for ye aske why they should adde.

Atb. Are not men allowed which are but readers, euen by the learnedst in the land? Do ye find fault with the Bishops? or are ye one of those which do not allow of bishops,

for such fellowes there be now adaies?

Zelot. I would ye should know that I am none of those which disallow Bishops: when as the word of God doth set it down to be a worthy worke: it is a very reuerend office, and exceedingly they are to be blamed, which do contemne it, or deface it. God hath ordained the office of Bishops in his Church, for to gouerne and feed his people: such as would abolish the ordinance of God, do resist God, and are enemies vnto the Church of Christ.

Ath. By my faith, I like ye the better for that.

Zel. I like you neuer the better for your swearing.

Ath. I am not so precise as to make any account of swearing by my faith.

Zelot. I thinke so, for faith is no more account made of, then as a packehorse, all is laid on his backe.

Ath. I pray God we may do no worse, and then I hope we shall doe well enough: are you without sinne? I doubt not but ye will commit as great offence to God as this, ere euer the wake be ended. Pull the beame out of your owne eie: if euery man would looke to himselfe, there should not be so much finding fault one with another.

Zelot. Where learne ye that praier, in the scrip-

scripture? The Prophet Dauid, Psalme 19. praieth to be cleansed from his secret sinnes, although they be neuer so small. Where learned ye to speake after this sort; no worse, and that ye hope then to doe well enough, is it nothing to breake so straite a rule of Christ? Doe yee not thinke that children dying in their infancie, before they can speake or worke, are damned for lesse sinnes? I speake of such as are not of Gods Church, when as they haue only originall sinne. You know not from how euill a roote this sinne doth spring: neither doe ye know the foulnesse of sinne, and therefore ye cannot tell how much God doth abhorre it and condemne it. For this cause, being as full of filthie vices and prophane sinnes as ye can be thrust, and of such indeed as God doth curse and hate, because they seeme small vnto you, ye suppose ye shall doe well enough. What if I haue greater in me, or that I shall commit greater (as you say) before the weeke be ended, doth that excuse you? I haue many secret sinnes in me, which I doe not see, because I doe not perfectly vnderstand the law of God: for these, I doe earnestly intreate the Lord to make them knowne vnto mee, by giuing mee more perfect vnderstanding of his will, and also to giue me power for to

cast

caſt them out. I haue alſo manie ſinnes in me which I ſe and know, that cleaue ſo faſt, that I cannot vtterly caſt them foorth: notwithſtanding I hate and abhorre them, I am wearie of them, I fight againſt them, I grone and ſigh in my heart with ſorrow for them, I feele no ſweetneſſe in them: for they are more bitter then gall vnto my ſoule: I am exceeding glad when I can ſuppreſſe them: I haue profeſſed and vowed a continuall war againſt them, and although I preuaile not ſo farre, as to be vtterly ridde of them, yet I labour by meditation in Gods word, and by heartie praier, to bring them vnder, that they raigne not ouer me, nor that I may not agree with them; and although I be not able to become perfect, yet with all the might I can, I ſtraine and breath to come as nigh perfection as I can: my deſire is good to reach it, and although I finde that I come manie degrees ſhort, yet I approach nearer and nearer. This is true repentance, this is that which S. Paule ſetteth forth in himſelfe, Rom. 7. Philip. 3. with this I know God is pleaſed, without this there cannot bee anie ſeruice done to God.

Ath. **I like not, when men will ſpie a mote in another mans eye.**

Zelot. Our Sauiour Chriſt doth not forbid

bid to espie a mote in another mans eie, for we are commanded to admonish one another, whatsoeuer it be wherein we do amisse: but such as you, which cannot abide to bee admonished, doe euer alleadge that saying of Christ, as though he had spoken it vnto this end, that one should not admonish another. It is a foule hypocrisie for a man to be curious in reprouing small faults in other, and make no conscience of great and foule vices in himselfe. Euerie man ought to looke vnto himselfe, and euerie man is bound by the word of God, and charitie, to looke vnto others, & to conuert them from their sinnes if they can. To conuert a sinner from going a stray, and to saue a soule from death, as Saint Iames speaketh, chapter. 5. verse. 20. and so to couer a multitude of sinnes, is a blessed thing, and ought to moue men with diligence to vse charitable admonition.

Ath. **If they would doe it in charitie, I could like it: but men haue no loue, they do it because they are prettie and captious.**

Zelot. Let a man se ye commit anie foule crime, and reproue ye, your answer is by and by, ye may not iudge: when as the matter is plaine and doth iudge it selfe: Now when a man doth admonish you, according as God com-

commaundeth, yee are bold with the same mouth, which said, ye ought not to iudge, to iudge him, affirming that he doth it of a captious and quarrelling minde: the thing being so exceeding good of it selfe: who made you able for to see into the hart of mā, and to finde that he doth it not well? You are those of whom the Prophet speaketh: Wo be vnto those which call good euill, and euill good. If he be a man spotted with vices himselfe, and doth reproue another, not caring for to amend, ye may boldly say he doth it of an euill minde: for can he be charitable vnto other men, to seeke their conuersion, and not to bee charitable vnto himselfe, to seeke his owne saluation? Or can he hate vngodlinesse in other, and not hate it in himselfe?

Ath. Well, the best of vs all may be amended, wee haue all infirmities: what would ye haue more then this, at the last to call for mercie? If a man be sorrie, and aske God forgiuenesse, is he not euen as well as they which are the most precise: the mercie of God must saue all: and what would yee haue a man care for more then to be saued? I praie God I maie haue time to repent in the end.

Zelot. Heere is good stuffe, here is sound

diuinitie:

diuinitie: I may well tearme this reason eue
the Porter of hell, for it openeth euen th
wideſt gate, that a thouſand may goe in o
a ranke. This is true, that the beſt of vs
may be amended, and that we haue all infir
mities: but yee doe wickedly applie it, fo
when ye ſhould reaſon thus, the beſt may b
amended, the moſt holy are ſpotted, an
therefore as Saint Paule doth teach, the
muſt endeuour for to proceede forward: fo
the word of God willeth men to ſtriue an
contend euen againſt all vncleaneneſſe, an
neuer to ceaſe, but to come as nigh perfecti
on as is poſſible. But you reaſon quite con
trarie, that becauſe the beſt are ſinners, there
fore men are to make ſmall account to a
mend. Ye ſhould thinke thus, the moſt godly
ly haue need to ſorrow & mourne, and pro
ceede in repentance, therefore how much
neede haue ſuch as are groſſe ſinners. For
our Sauiour Chriſt doth ſhew, Iohn 8. that
whoſoeuer committeth ſinne, is the ſeruant
of ſinne: Now ſo long as a man is the ſeruant
of ſinne, ſo long is he not the ſeruant of
God, for no man can ſerue two ſo contrarie
maiſters. Saint Iohn ſaith, he that commit
teth ſinne, is of the diuell. Where learned
ye this, that a man may continue in his vi
ces all his life, and at the laſt call for mercie?

God

God commandeth men to repent ſpeedily, and not to put off from day to day: he threatneth exceeding ſharpely, in the firſt Chapter of the Prouerbs, that when hee hath called and cried vnto men for to returne from their euil waies, and they haue refuſed; that at the laſt they ſhall call and not be heard: he will laugh when their deſtructiō commeth vpon them: they ſhall ſeeke him, but not find him. Do you thinke that when God hath called and we refuſe, that we ſhall not call and hee refuſe?

Anſ. **The ſcripture ſaith, that at what time ſoeuer a ſinner doth repent him of his ſin, God will forgiue him.**

Zelot. If the ſcripture ſpeake any thing to the comfort of the ſorrowfull hart, the Diuel doth teach the impenitent for to abuſe it to their hardening. It is moſt true, that at what time ſoeuer a ſinner doth repent, his ſins are all forgiuen, but is it in a mans choice for to repent when he will? can he take a new hart when it doth pleaſe him? can he haue the new birth and a right ſpirit when he will? It is God which doth create a man a new, or maketh him a new creature in Chriſt, when it pleaſeth him. A man needeth not to care for any thing but to be ſaued: but that is not ſo eaſie a matter as men thinke. Striue for to en-

ter: The way is narrow and the gate is straight which leadeth vnto life, & few there be which find it; and if this bee true which you say, that a man may liue in sinne all his life, and at the last be saued euen for vttering a few words; then the way is broad and easie, who cannot find it, who almost doth not walke in it? But alas, it is a broken staffe which men do leane vnto; God is very mercifull, but not to those which despise his gospell, for vengeance belongeth vnto such: it is vnpossible (saith the holy Ghost Heb. 2.) that such should escape. And although ye haue neuer so long time to repent, if God do not worke it in ye, you shall die in that blindnes and hardnesse of hart in which ye haue liued: We must seeke in our life time to be begotten by the word: for the scripture saith, God doth beget his children by that.

Ath. **Shall not a man hope for to repent at the last?**

Zelot. Marke what repentance is, and trie whether ye can repent now, if ye cannot, what moueth ye to thinke that ye shall bee able then?

Ath. **I hope I do repent now, and shall do at the end.**

Zelot. Repentance is a returning home vnto God from all euill vices and corrupt

desires, which are in the flesh and in the hart. To be renued by repentance, cannot be but where a man is renued in knowledge, for that is one part of the image of God which must be restored in vs: Reade in the 4. Chapter to the Ephes. from the 17. verse, forward: If a man continue in darkenesse, he doth not repent: He which committeth his foule sins still, although it bee but in the desire of his heart, hath not repented: He which doth not feele sorrow and griefe, and hath not a broken and contrite heart and a sorrowful spirit, hath not repented: he which doth not eschue euill and doe good, hath not repented. All these are taught by the word, for that is it by which we must cleanse our wayes: and therefore ye may boldly say, that hee which learneth not out of Gods word to repent, cannot repent: for although if it were possible he could repent for all other sinnes, yet this one sin, to set light by the instruction of the Gospell, will make still worse then they of Sodome, as our Sauiour doth tell vs, Mat. 11.

Ath. **Will you condemne those which call for mercy at their end, which neuer repented before?**

Zelot. We may not pronounce vppon any one man, because God onely seeth what is in

man. But yet we may boldly go so farre as the word of God doth leade vs: and by it we may see what God requireth and what God doth condemne. We may see that the common and generall repentance which all professe at their end, is not so much as a shadow of true repentance: repentance cannot be in a man, especially vpon a sudden, but he must needes feele a wonderful change in himself, he must needes be able for to say I haue repented, I know and feele that I am a new man, and therefore because I know most certainely that there is repentance in me, I know most certainely that I shall bee saued: for God promiseth saluation vnto euery one which doth repent. In the common repentance men feele no such thing, but are still (as they may bee well enough) in doubt of saluation.

Ath. **Shall not all such as call vpon God be heard? surely I dare not but thinke they shall.**

Zelot. I am sure because the Lord doth speake it that whosoeuer doth cal vppon him shal be saued: but yet ye must put this in, that then they must pray in faith: as for the prayers of the wicked man which doth not repent, and therefore hath not the true faith, they are no prayers before God, although he

crie loude, or call neuer ſo often: for vnto ſuch the Lord ſpeaketh in the firſt Chapter of the Prophet Eſay, when ye ſtretch foorth your hands I wil turne away mine eyes from ye. Alſo if ye multiply your prayer, I will not heare. Likewiſe the holy Ghoſt ſaith by Salomon in the Prouerbes, that the ſacrifice of the wicked is an abhomination. And in the ſame booke it is ſaid: He that turneth away his eare from hearing the Law, euen his prayer ſhall be abominable, and therefore in the latter ende of the fourth Chapter of Eccleſiaſtes, he aduiſeth men when they come into the houſe of God, to take heed to their feete, and to be readier to heare them to offer the ſacrifice of fooles: for (ſaith he) they know not that they do euill. Now ye ſhall find many men cry in their miſeries, and make great confeſſion of their vngodly life, but yet without true repentance, as it is manifeſt: for ſo ſoone as they proſper againe, ye ſhall ſee them returne to their old byas: if they had truely repented, then ſhould it euer continue with them: many that liue in malice ſo ſoone as they be dangerouſly ſicke, wil be ready to aske forgiuenes, and to forgiue all the world: they know it booteth not to beare malice any longer, but ſo ſoone as they be able to craule out of their bed, and to

man. But yet we may boldly go so farre as the word of God doth leade vs: and by it we may see what God requireth and what God doth condemne. We may see that the common and generall repentance which all professe at their end, is not so much as a shadow of true repentance: repentance cannot be in a man, especially vpon a sudden, but he must needes feele a wonderful change in himself, he must needes be able for to say, I haue repented, I know and feele that I am a new man, and therefore because I know most certainely that there is repentance in me, I know most certainely that I shall bee saued: for God promiseth saluation vnto euery one which doth repent. In the common repentance men feele no such thing, but are still (as they may bee well enough) in doubt of saluation.

Ash. **Shall not all such as call vpon God be heard? surely I dare not but thinke they shall.**

Zelot. I am sure because the Lord doth speake it, that whosoeuer doth cal vppon him shal be saued: but yet ye must put this in, that then they must pray in faith: as for the prayers of the wicked man which doth not repent, and therefore hath not the true faith, they are no prayers before God, although he

crie loude, or call neuer so often: for vnto such the Lord speaketh in the first Chapter of the Prophet Esay, when ye stretch foorth your hands I wil turne away mine eyes from ye. Also if ye multiply your prayer, I will not heare. Likewise the holy Ghost saith by Salomon in the Prouerbes, that the sacrifice of the wicked is an abhomination. And in the same booke it is said: He that turneth away his eare from hearing the Law, euen his prayer shall be abominable, and therefore in the latter ende of the fourth Chapter of Ecclesiastes, he aduiseth men when they come into the house of God, to take heed to their feete, and to be readier to heare them to offer the sacrifice of fooles: for (saith he) they know not that they do euill. Now ye shall find many men cry in their miseries, and make great confession of their vngodly life, but yet without true repentance, as it is manifest: for so soone as they prosper againe, ye shall see them returne to their old byas: if they had truely repented, then should it euer continue with them: many that liue in malice so soone as they be dangerously sicke, wil be ready to aske forgiuenes, and to forgiue all the world: they know it booteth not to beare malice any longer, but so soone as they be able to craule out of their bed, and to

ſtand vpon their legs, ye ſhall ſee their old withered malice (as it ſeemed) ſpring a freſh againe, which is a ſtrong poofe, that they neuer truly repented, howſoeuer they thought they did. And euen ſo is it in all other ſins, they ſeeme vnto men to repent, they aske God forgiueneſſe, but yet the hart abideth ſtill the ſame that it was before God: they haue not put off the ſinful body of the fleſh, there is no change in them before God, howſoeuer they ſeeme to be changed before men. This counterfeit repentance maketh men bold all their life to deſpiſe the holy word of God, which ſhould inſtruct and guide them, it cauſeth them at their end not to feare the wrath of God, nor the vengeance to come: becauſe they thinke God is ſatisfied with this repentance: and alſo becauſe they know not their ſins, they ſuppoſe that they are but ouer the ſhoes, when as they are drowned in the gulfe of vncleanneſſe ouer head and eares.

Ath. **God helpe vs if it be thus: how ſhall poore men do then?**

Zele. Men muſt apply themſelues al their life to ſeeke for the knowledge of God, to increaſe in faith and repentance, that when they come to their end, they may haue a teſtimony of conſcience, y they haue feared God.

Likewiſe

Likewise, when ye come to a ſicke man and aske how he doth, if he can but ſay, as it pleaſeth God, you anſwere, that is enough neighbour, hold yee there: If he ſay I haue offended God, and I pray God haue mercy vppon me, there needeth no more as you thinke. Ye ſhould teach them the Law, that they may ſee how they haue offended God, ye ſhould ſhew them the fearefull curſe, and horrible vengeance due vnto ſinne, that ſo they may be ſtricken with remorſe and ſorrow: ye ſhould ſhew them alſo the glad tidings of the Goſpell, and what Chriſt offereth vnto the penitent ſinner: ye ſhould teach them what holines God requireth at their hand, how they may come vnto it, what promiſe they haue made vnto God of it in baptiſme: yee ſhould inſtruct them in all the principall points of the faith: that ſo they may haue the reuiuing faith which ſhall iuſtifie and ſaue them.

Ath. What difference can you then betweene theſe which are taught as you would haue them, and ſuch as haue knowledge: they can no more but repent, call for mercie, and beleeue, and this do they as well as the other.

Zelot. You thinke there is no difference, but there is this difference, that the one part

doth beleeue and repent in deed, and the other but in word: as our Sauiour Christ Matt. 15. alleadgeth the saying of God by his Prophet: This people draw neere me with their mouth, and honour me with their lippes, but their heart is farre from me.

Ath. What is meant when a man doth speake with his mouth, and meaneth not with his heart, but these haue a good meaning in their mind.

Zelot. It is meant when a man approcheth with his mouth, and hath stil a wicked heart, and an euil conscience, for those do remoue a man so farre from God, that no blind intent can make him neare vnto him. God looketh for great things in the hartes of those which call vpon him.

Ath. I thinke God acepteth the prayer of the honest poore man as well as of anie other, & wil heare it as soone as he wil heare the prayer of those which know most, and are the best learned.

Zelot. God is no accepter of persons, he heareth the poore as well as the rich, the vnlearned as well as the learned, so that their prayers be made a right: but if ye speake of those honest men which are so called, and yet are void of al knowledge of Gods word, and of religion, it is an easie matter for to proue

that

that their prayers are not good.

Ath. Can ye haue any better prayer then the Lords prayer, when they pray that, can ye require more?

Zelot. There can be no better prayer then the Lords prayer, and he which prayeth that right, must needes be saued. But let me aske you this question, what if a man pray the Lords prayer with his mouth, and regardeth it not in his hart, shall his prayer be good?

Ath. His prayer cannot be good, he doth but mocke God.

Zelot. Then tell me this, a man praieth thus, hallowed be thy name: in word he seemeth to desire that the name of God may be sanctified and honoured: hee goeth his way, and blasphemeth the name of God, or heareth it blasphemed and neuer careth, raileth vpon his word, dishonoureth him, do you not thinke that he made a sweet prayer? In the like manner he saith, Thy wil be done in earth as it is in heauen, he goeth away and is so far from desiring to do the wil of God, that he neuer careth for to know it: whereby it is euident that he lipped meate with his hart that which he said with his tongue.

Moreouer, hee would seeme in words to craue of God, that he and others might do the will of God in earth, as the Angels do in

heauen

heauen: and yet tell him when hee breaketh the will of God, and his answere is, I am not so precise, I am not so curious, I will not bee so holy; you are full of the spirit, and then he will euen reproch that which hee seemed to pray for. And these are the prayers of those poore honest men, which you thinke God heareth as well as the prayers of any other. I might go thorough al the petitions and find the like. It is exceeding great pitie that men want instruction: for a great multitude do trust to their pratling prayers, when as they do not either vnderstand what they say, or else meane the contrary.

Ath. If a man labour all the weeke truly and honestly, and vpon the Sabboth day come to the Church and make his prayers, shall we say God regarderh not his prayer, because hee doth not vnderstand what hee prayeth? his intent is good, he doth his good will: he hath a wife and children to prouide for, he must follow the world, and let preaching go or else he shall beg: and so long as he doth hurt no man, but dealeth vprightly, I think God doth require no more at his hands. Such as haue naught else for to do, let them seeke for knowledge.

Zelo. Ye are like vnto a hedge which is full of briers and pricking thornes, a man

cannot

cannot lay hold on ye, vnlesse hee bring his hedging gloues and his bill: Ye haue many things to shroud your selfe vnder, and to keepe the truth from touching of ye. As the Lord in his word hath set forth the whole armour for a Christian souldier: so likewise Satan doth by suggestion teach men to arme themselues against the Lord. But you must be stript of your armour, at the least ye must be shewed that it is no armour of proofe. Ye say that if a man labour truly and honestly all the weeke: those labour so, which do it not alone for necessitie, but because God requireth that men should painefully trauell: and which haue the word of God as a lanterne for to guide their steps: for whatsoeuer a man doth, if it be not in obedience of God in his word, it is sinne. To pray vpon the Sabboth for fashion sake, is very detestable; because we are in continuall danger, and in continuall need, and want helpe continually from the Lord, vppon whom our saluation doth daily depend, we are commanded to pray continually, or to haue our hearte watching thereunto. To pray without vnderstanding, is not praying, but mumming. You speake as though it were a thing which God doth allow, that men should freke more after the world then after God: and so

make

make the world their God. And because they haue wife and children to prouide for, therefore they cannot seeke to know God: although wee were not commanded to seeke first, the kingdome of God, that is to seeke that chiefly and more then the world, and then God hath promised, that al these things shall bee cast vpon vs. How shall any man be excused when God maketh this promise vnto all: & he doth performe it vnto as many as do trust him. I haue been yong (saith the Prophet) and now am old, yet did I neuer see the righteous forsaken, and his seede begging their bread. When ye say ye must follow the world, and let preaching go, ye were euen as good say, yee must follow the diuell, and let God goe. And if an ignorant man could come so farre as to deale vprightly, and to hurt no man neither in word nor deed (which notwithstanding they come nothing neere) yet this would not serue the turne: for there is a God who will be knowne and worshipped in that religion which he teacheth. Haue ye so fleshly eyes that ye can looke no higher? Do ye thinke God requireth no more but an honest and ciuill conuersation towards men? God requireth euen of the poore labouring man that he should (if he will bee

(blessed

blessed) meditate in his Law, or his doctrine, day and night, Psalme 1. Likewise when he saith that the man is blessed which feareth the Lord, to the end we might know which that man is, he addeth immediately, he hath great delight in his commandements. But the most part of your honest men now a dayes, delight so much in the word of God, and meditate so much in it, that they care not a button though they neuer heare it: they loue it and set as much by it as they do by an old shoe, and are not so forward as you do allow, to seeke for the knowledge of God, when they haue naught else for to do: for you thinke ye grant a liberall allowance to God.

Ath. Would ye make me beleeue that God doth require that men should leaue their businesse: when they be poore and haue charge of children, and giue themselues to reading, and hearing of preachings. Would ye haue him let his children sterue?

Zelat. God doth not require that men should leaue their businesse, but as they haue times to seeke for the things of the body, so also are there times for to seeke for heauenly things. God hath not made men for this life, but for the world to come. He hath set the

promises

promises of eternall life before them that seeke them painfully in his word, men must not be as bruite beastes, all for the belly.

Ath. What if there be no preaching whereon man owerleth?

Zelot. What if there be within three or foure miles?

Ath. Shall he runne three or foure miles after that?

Zelot. Ye goe aboue three or foure miles to the market for to prouide meate for the carion body, but ye would not allow a man vppon that day, which is the market day for the foode of the soule, to go halfe so farre, You are the children of the world, earth wormes, those which labour for the meate which perisheth, but will not labour for the meate which indureth for euer, Iohn. 6. Ye loue the world, and the things which are in the world, and therefore as Saint Iohn saith in his first Epistle, the loue of the father is not in you, yee cannot serue God and Mammon.

Ath. Let them runne that will, when I see them agree better together, then I will heare them when they cannot agree themselues, they are vnwise which hearken vnto them.

Zelot. Ye might be a counsellor for your graue

graue wisedome, who is able to answere you in this matter, when ye dash forth so strong an argument grounded vpon so great reason and infallible principles? but I pray you what would ye haue done, if ye had lived in the time of Ieremy the Prophet, and also of other Prophets, when there were the Priests and the rulers in the Temple, with many which tooke vpon them to be Prophets, and to speake in the name of the Lord, set against a few of Gods messengers? What would ye haue done when Christ preached, and the Pharisies and Priests, and all the learned against him? would ye not haue heard Paule, because he disagreed with the false Apostles? The Scriptures haue foretold that there shal be heresies, sectes, and false teachers in the Church, euen to the worlds end. Your great skill hath taught ye to make so good a choyce of the time when ye will heare, and to take so long a day; for I warrant ye it will not bee two weekes before the day of doome. Ye should speake plainly and say: Ye neuer meane for to heare, and that ye would wish all other for to be of the same mind: and then ye should be little troubled with Gods word. Crie out against the preachers, but let your meaning be against preaching it selfe. The Diuell is a very skilfull

workeman,

workman, hee doth not teach his scholers to say sie vpon Gods word: but to find excuses how to shift themselues from hearing the same.

Ath. If they would teach men how to beleeue better, then I could be content for to say as you say: But they would driue men into despaire, and bring them out of beliefe with the feare of damnation.

Zelot. This wedge hath bene driuen often enough already, neuerthelesse, because ye are so knottie and crabbed a peece to cleaue, I will giue it one blow more: the matter is bainously taken, that men Preach sharpely in reprehending the vices which now raine. They are now said to preach nothing but the Law, which indeede cannot conuert a man from vngodlinesse, but of it selfe is the strength of sinne: they are said to be murtherers, because they preach but the dead letter which doth kill. No doubt whosoeuer doth preach no more but the Law, and so damnation; is no minister of Christ. But here lieth all the matter, men would be flattered and soothed in their sins, they are loth for to heare of any iudgement of God against wickednesse: and as they be like vnto the people of the Iewes when the Prophets were sent vnto them, corrupt and corrupting themselues;

selues, and grudging against the Messengers of God when they threatned vengeance, and willing them not to preach so, but to preach pleasant things: euen so are there now, which lay pillowes vnder their elbowes, and preach peace, peace, when all is corrupt in their liues, and therfore there can be no peace. He which shall reade the Prophets, shal find the state of the Church then, and ours now, in al these things very like. First, all foule vices ouerflowing, as among vs. Secondly, the people presuming vpon their blind faith, and counterfeit repentance, and hypocriticall prayers, as they do now: Thirdly, the Prophets sent of God exceeding sharply reprouing them and denouncing the iudgements of God against them: Fourthly, the people repining there at, and thinking themselues hardly dealt withall: desiring to bee more tenderly handled, as to heare pleasant things and to haue them prophecy of wine and strong drinke: Lastly, certaine Preachers fit for the turne, healing vp, and smoothing vp all with sweete words, and telling them all is wel, as is wel. He which doth but lightly reade ouer the Prophets, and cannot find all these things, is but a simple man. In like manner, hee which doth dwell among vs at this day, and perceiueth no such matters, is but a stranger.

Ath. Nay you that are precise Puritans doe find fault where there is none: you condemne men for euery trifle: whereas ye are but men, and haue your infirmities as well as other, yet ye would make your selues as holy as Angels.

Zelot. I abhorre the error of the Chatheristes or Puritans, I confesse that I am loden with corruptions: if that be your meaning, to charge mee with that opinion, which is wicked and diuelish. But if ye take the name Puritane for one which hath more care to obey God, then the common sort, and therefore laboureth to keepe himselfe pure and vnspotted of the world (as S. Iames speaketh) then looke to it, that ye be not found among those which reuile not men but God. If ye meane by precise men, those which are so scripulous, as to make sinne where there is none, as your words do plainely shew, then do I vtterly renounce that name for to bee called precise, & I disallow such fond persõs, whosoeuer they be. But I know you meane those which walke precisely as S. Paule willeth, and do take heed to their waies: not condemning men but admonishing them, not in trifles, but in waighty matters: although you count them trifles. The commandements of God (at the least some of them) are but trifles with you. You see not

not consider how great the Lord God is, and therefore ye dare affirme diuers sins done against him to be but trifling and small, yee measure not sin with a true measure, when ye do measure it after the rule of a man. Ye do not know wherefore there is eternall death threatned against euery small sin: yee maruell at that, because yee are blind & cannot iudge how great he is, whose will is disobeyed. Let me set it before ye: Doe ye not suppose that if one of your degree should say something against ye, that it were a reproch, as for example, call ye knaue, were it not an offence?

Ath. I thinke I may well say he doth offend, for he ought not to deale so with his neighbor.

Zelot. Then hee is worthy some rebuke for his euill tongue.

Ath. Yea, and to confesse his fault also.

Zelot. What if he should giue such language to a Iustice of peace? or to some inferior Magistrate? ye will confesse the fault is greater: because it is against a higher person.

Ath. No doubt the fault should be greater, & he were worthy to be set by ye heeles for it.

Zelot. What if he should do it to a noble man, as one of the chiefe Counsellors of the Prince, were it not then much greater?

Ath. I must néedes confesse so: and such a villaine were worthy for to lose his eares.

Zel. What if he should do it vnto a Prince?

Ath. **He were worthy then for to loose his life.**

Zelot. Do ye not know that God is in an infinite degree aboue Princes? they are but dust before him.

Ath. **I know that well enough.**

Zelot. Wherefore haue he not the reason then for to consider, that those sins which seeme to be very small, are exceeding great because they be done against his infinite Maiesty: the ignorance of this point causeth many men for to make but a light account of diuerse sins, and euen to laugh at them: likewise to mocke at those which make conscience of them, counting them ouer precise & nice. Such men do not know the Lord aright in his most high Maiestie: They know not the waightinesse of his law, euen in the least point in it. And it is ouer childish which they obiect against the godly, Haue not you infirmities? are you not men? What would they gather hereby, that because men haue infirmities, therefore they may not reproue such as wilfully and carelesly offend? The rest of your speech is a meere slander, a deuice which the diuel hath found out for to shame true godlinesse. For let a man haue but the tenth part of the zeale which the word of God requireth, or neuer so little a sparke of

endeuour for to walke vprightly, and he shall haue it cast in his teeth, that he thinketh himselfe halfe a God, and taketh himselfe to be as holy as an Angell.

Ash. A number do so indeede, or else they would not be so ready for to check euery man: and esteeme so well of themselues.

Zelot. Doth that bone stick in your throte still, take heede that it doe not choke ye. Ye take it for a sore checke, when any doth refuse to take part with you in your wickednes: following the counsell of S. Paul, when he saith, haue no fellowshyp with the vnfruitfull works of darknes, but rather reproue them. Light is come into the world, and men loue darknes more then light, because their workes be euill. How well they esteeme of themselues, you cannot tell: this is most certaine, that although a Godly man hath nothing of his owne for to boast of, because it is the grace of the Lord, which hath put the difference, yet he may well thinke better of himselfe, then of the wicked, and such as haue no regard to serue God but in a few words.

Ash. Doe ye thinke that there bee none which are ouer precise: which would seeme for to be so holy, and yet are not?

Zelot. The diuell is a cunning workman, when hee seeketh for to bring the truth into discredite, he can play on both hands, he can

deceiue on euery side. And therefore he hath some vaine and curious braines, which are ouer precise in things which are no sin, passing by foule and great sinnes in themselues, which is a great vanitie, and vnder colour of godly zeale, which they would seeme for to haue, they couer their bitternesse euen of wormewood, and gall: which vncharitably sometimes they cast forth vpon such as are more godly then themselues. But this ought not for to be any discredit vnto such as are zealous and earnest against those things which are vices indeed, although they seeme to be neuer so small: as for example, when one doth sweare as you did, by his faith, or by bread, or fire: tell him of it: what is his answere? ye are ouer precise: I meane no hurt neither to God nor men: I speake earnestly, I do not lie: If it be a sinne, it is but a small sin. But see how grosse an excuse this is, he breaketh the cõmandement of God, and yet he meaneth no hurt: Christ our great teacher doth straightly vrge it, and yet he saith it is but a small sin, a thing not to be regarded. How much dishonour is this to our heauenly Maister, to say that hee taught things so small and trifling, that they are not to be regarded?

Ath. Well, it is happy that we shall be saued by faith in Christ, although we be sinfull: he hath shed his blood for vs: I loue for to be saued by him, what would ye haue more?

Zele.

Zelot. It is happy indeede for those which haue faith, for they are cleansed from their sins. But such as you seeke no more but to make the death of Christ as an easie score to set all vpon: for ye are like to the man which thinking that hee should haue all of his Hostesse for scoring vp, tooke very liberally: ye thinke the reckoning is now so easie, that ye may set cocke a hoope, all is paid for. But if I should try your faith by the word, ye should see that ye haue little enough, and therfore your score will faile in the end, and grow to a greater payment then ye suppose.

Arb. **Whatsoeuer you say, ye shall neuer driue me from beléeuing in Christ, nor all the sort of ye.**

Zelot. I would not for ten thousand worlds be the man, which should driue any one from the faith in Christ, I do seeke to bring ye vnto the faith in Christ.

Arb. **Ye may keepe such talking to your selfe, and let me alone: I beléeue as well as you, take care for your selfe, you shall not answere for me.**

Zelot. Now yee are sure I trow, for this night, ye haue stopped my mouth, and giuen me a bone to gnaw vpon. But I pray ye, shall not I answere for you in no respect? What if I see ye are blinde, and ready for to fall into the pit of eternal destruction, and wil not put forth

my hand for to succour ye, is it not to be laid vnto my charge, that I wanted loue? Therefore I can easily pull your bridle out of my mouth, and be so bold as for to meddle with ye: we will a little trie, because ye bragge so stoutly, how well ye beleeue. Ye beleeue Christ was crucified, and suffered vpon the Crosse: but are ye able for to proue that ye beleeue in Christ crucified?

Ath. I say I doe, are you able for to disproue me?

Zelot. Sinne is not slaine in ye, therefore ye doe not.

Ath. How proue ye that sin is not slaine in me?

Zelot. Because it doth raigne in ye, therefore it is aliue.

Ath. I know not what ye meane by that.

Zelot. Ye are led by sinne, ye delight in it, ye haue not mortified the lusts and concupiscences of the same: and therfore ye haue not learned Christ, as S. Paul speaketh, Ephesians 4. Ye haue not put off the olde man, and put on the new man: the death and passion of Christ hath not slaine sinne in you: for to beleeue in Christ crucified, is for to bee crucified with him, as the Apostles doe teach in sundry places. The reason is this, Christ was not crucified for to slay sinne in himselfe (for hee had none) but in his members, which are ioyned

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and knit vnto him by faith, in them the force and power of his death doth shew it selfe: now hee which hath this worke of the death of Christ in him, that he feeleth himselfe crucified concerning the body of sinne, his faith in the passion of Christ is but a dead faith, and cannot saue him. This is the cause why S. Paul saith, Rom. 8. that those which are in Christ, walke not after the flesh, but after the spirit. S. Iohn saith, 1. Epistle, Chap. 3. Ye know that he was made manifest to take away our sinnes, and in him was no sinne: Whosoeuer abideth in him sinneth not, hee that sinneth hath not seene him, nor knowne him.

Ath. Then by that reason, ye would proue that all that beleeue in Christ, are perfect without sinne: I thinke all are sinners.

Zelot. Whosoeuer is borne of God sinneth not. 1. Iohn 3. 9.

Ath. Is there any man which can say that he is without sinne?

Zelot. Not one which liueth in this flesh.

Ath. Then ye are contrarie vnto your selfe: for euen now ye said: That whosoeuer abideth in Christ sinneth not, and he which is borne of God sinneth not: and now ye confesse that all are sinners so long as they liue.

Zelot. I am not contrary vnto my selfe, but your blindnesse causeth yee for to thinke so. Looke in the Epistle to the Romaines, Chap. 7.

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and there ye shall finde how S. Paul coupleth both these things together in himselfe, which you iudge to be so contrary, that by no meanes they may be found in one man together at one time. Hee confesseth that there was a law in his members, rebelling against the law of his mind, and leading him captiue to the law of sinne. And yet a little before in the same Chapter, he saith, That he did not commit the euill, but sin which dwelt in him. The reason which he maketh is, that he did consent vnto the law, and would haue done the good, but he did the euill which hee hated. To make the matter plaine, thus it is: S. Paul was regenerate, but yet not in full perfection, for the remnant of sinne did abide in him, that which the part regenerate did, or couered to doe, or consented vnto, that he saith he did: and that which the corruption which did still remaine in him, forced him for to do, that he saith he did not, but sin which dwelled in him. He doth esteeme himselfe in the part regenerate, he counteth the remnants of the old man, to be but as excrements, or as a dead carion, which did abide in him, & annoy him. His delight & desire was vpon the good, he hated the euil, and therfore when he did sin, because it was against his consent, and against his will, it was no obedience which he gaue vnto it: he did not therefore serue sin, neither did sin raigne ouer him, but exercise a certaine ty-

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rannie ouer him, which he could not shake of.

Arb. I know not what ye meane, when ye haue said what ye can, all must be sinners.

Zelot. Ye may very easily perswade me to beleeue that ye know not what I mean: if your fiue wits were fifteene, they would helpe nothing in this case. Because ye know not what this meaneth, ye know not what faith in Christ crucified meaneth, ye know not what repentance meaneth, ye can see no difference of sinners: all are sinners say you, and the death of Christ is that which saueth, not considering that the death of Christ first killeth those who it maketh aliue. For this cause men are greatly ouershot oftentimes: when they come vnto a sicke man, they think if he say, I beleeue Christ died for my sinnes, and shed his blood for me, that then all is as wel as may be. If it were faith indeed in the blood of Christ, they must needs be in good case: for all that beleeue in him, shall be saued. But they stay vpon a bare fantasie, which is a dead & weake faith, not making them to feele the power of the death of Christ. Ignorance is so deepely setled in mens minds, that let a man be neuer so wicked, neuer so far from true knowledge of God, if he can make but some generall confession, they neuer looke further. And because they see almost all (howsoeuer they liue) finde this, it maketh them also to be careleſſe, and neuer for to thinke of the

new

new birth, of which Christ speaketh, when he saith vnto Nicodemus, except a man be borne againe, he cannot see the kingdome of God: This new birth is shut out at the doores, and therefore no doubt God doth shut them out of his kingdome, which make no account of it.

Ath. **Make your selfe neuer so skilfull, yet ye cannot tell which man God saueth, and which he condemneth.**

Zelot. It is not the will of God, that wee should take vpon vs for to pronounce vpon any man, and to say he is damned: because we must leaue the secret counsel of God vnto himselfe, who is not bound vnto vs, to giue any account of his doings. But I pray ye let vs a little consider how this headlesse bolt of yours is shot forth against true godlinesse. Thus you reason, no man can tell who are saued, and who are damned, therefore wee are not for to care for triall of our faith and repentance: and that therefore the rules which are giuen in the word of GOD in these points are nothing worth. Euery man may search and know in himselfe, whether he be in good case or not: and wee ought euery one for to try our selues by that which the word teacheth so plentifully. I would wish ye to consider what the cause is, why the greatest multitude goe to destruction: euen because they know not these things, and therefore see not the great danger which

they

they be in, but can boldly beare themselues in hand, that they shall doe well enough. Many doe laugh euen in the middest of destruction, I meane, that they can sport themselues euen in doing those things which are their bane: and all because they trust to this beliefe which you bragge of. For as on the one side true faith and true repentance, and conuersion vnto God, do salue all the sores and sicknesses of the soule: euen so the common dead faith and counterfeit repentance, may be called the diuels plaister, by which he doth a little in the top, for a time, salue the deepe and deadly wounds, but they rancle within, & bring vtter destruction. It is great pitie that the word of God is not laid open in all places, that the people might come to the vnderstanding of Christ and his power, in translating them out of the power of darknes into his kingdome of light: which is wrought with great and diligent teaching, because men are made of a dull mettall, and hard to conceiue spirituall and heauenly things.

Ath. **Well, I must leaue ye now: ye haue dealt very hardly with me: it were good that you Puritanes should consider your selues, and become better subiects to the Prince.**

Zelot. I am like to haue a very good farewel at your hands, for all my trauell in teaching ye. But I looked for no other reward from ye: the blacke Moore cannot change his hew,

nor

nor the Cat of the mountaine her spots. I must suffer your reproch, for if they haue called the good man of the house Beelzebub, how much more those which be of his houshold?

Those which consider not themselues, are worse then mad men: I told ye before, that I do not allow that vice. For your slanderous accusation, I scorne and defie it: I may boldly take the Lord as a witnesse vnto my conscience, that I doe honour and obey the Prince, and that I doe condemne, hate, and accurse all disobedience vnto the higher powers. But this hath euer beene the ready way which the diuel hath vsed to bring those which feare God into hatred: by his instruments to charge them to be enemies vnto Princes. Christ was accused of treason, & condemned as an enemie to Cæsar. S. Paul diuers times, was thought to be a man which did trouble the state. And whosoeuer shall reade the auncient stories of the Church, shall finde that this continued still from time to time.

Ath. **Are not there many which count themselues very holy, and yet breake the Queenes lawes?**

Zelot. What if it should fall out, as it doth fall out sometimes, that godly Princes command something which is contrary vnto Gods word, should we obey God or men? It is a very grosse thing to thinke, that a man for obeying God,

God, doth disobey his Prince. I would know this also, whether the breach of euery particular law, doth make a man by and by an euill subiect to his Prince? if it should, I thinke true subiects might soone be numbred. Likewise, I would know this, whether a man which is disobedient vnto God and despiseth his lawes, can for conscience sake bee obedient vnto his Prince? Hauing bin found vnfaithfull to God, shall he be iudged faithfull to men? And where as such as you cry out against those which professe the Gospel, that they breake the Queenes lawes, & are not the Queenes friends, I answer ye thus: I will aduenture all that I haue, that let proofe be made, and those which haue this most in their mouthes; the Queenes lawes, the Queenes lawes, as though they were altogether made of obedience, shall bee found to breake two for their one, whom they accuse. If ye did cry out in this matter moued with a good conscience, then would ye be carefull for to keepe the lawes your selues: and if ye haue care of Princes lawes, then would ye haue care of Gods lawes.

Ath. Wherein can ye accuse me?

Zelot. I meane not to accuse you, but to speake that which I know by a number, they breake her Maiesties lawes in their apparrell, in their meate, in their words, being blasphemers and raylers, in quarrelling and fighting,

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in dicing and carding, and bowling, and in many such like. And because ye speake often of this: who are the Queenes friends? I say none but such as feare God: for the wicked and vngodly doe prouoke God vnto anger against the Realme, and doe procure the destruction of it, God heareth the prayers of such as feare and loue his lawes, when they crie vnto him for their Prince: therefore there can be no more vtter enemies vnto Princes, then such as are wicked against God. Now this is a very preposterous thing, that you which are rebels against God, should beare men in hand, that ye be the friends of the Prince, and that such as are godly, they must be counted enemies.

Ath. **I can say no more but God blesse and saue her.**

Zelot. Amen. I pray God for his mercy sake graunt, that we may be thankfull for those exceeding great blessings, which he hath by her heaped vpon vs, both for body and soule, and the Lord giue vs louing and obedient hearts towards her. And also I beseech God to keepe her out of the hand of her enemies, to gouerne her with his blessed spirit, that shee may exalt and magnifie his glorious Gospell more and more, and repaire the ruines of his Church: and so glorifie him in this world, that in the world to come she may be glorified for euer. Amen.

FINIS.